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# HIGGLEDEY- PIGGLEDEY

BY  
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*By the same Author*

WARLIKE SNIPS AND SNAPS.

MATRIMONIAL WEALS & WOES.

FROM AN INDIAN STATE.

BABU PICHE LAL IN EUROPE.

WITH grateful acknowledgments to *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, Bombay, in the columns of which these stories have already been published under the title of “Essays’ Grave and Gay,” and “More Essays Grave and Gay.”

*To My Wife.*

## KHUSHDILPUR STATE

I beg to notify all concerned that I was taking up my residency in Khushdilpur State since about 4 months ago under kind patronage of H. H. Nawab Sahib (K.C.S.I., 13 guns) and I can testify indeed that this place has awfully nice and sweet air, and salubrious water, also inhabitants are highly genteel and winsome. Endued with such climacteric and other perfections, it would be no exaggeration that it is well-nigh a terrestrial Paradice. Anyone however wealthy may wish to live here, and if so I have one thoroughly decent house (mansion rather) which I shall hire at a very good bargain if required, particulars by return post to bona-fide enquirers preferably noblemen. It has nice furnitures and ironmongeries too and every sort of domestical convenience, its name being *Shiv Lodge*, and I can warmly recommend, and dirt-cheap at the price, but better apply by wire in case it is snapt up in the interim.

But apart from this you will doubtless be keen to hear currant-news of self including my family members. We have had some nasty ups-and-downs (mostly downs, Bad Luck) but Thanks to Great God Almighty! no actual demises, in spite of narrow-squeaks. Needless to say, I am bearing these "outrageous slings and arrows" fortitudinously as becomes an old soldier of the Great War.

Pipi my dear espoused wife (daughter of Mr. Meli Tokatlian, Armenian merchant) has journeyed to Misr (Egypt) to administer her male parent aetat 81 and creditably alleged to be fatally sick, and certain to kick the bucket at an early date if not sooner. It is a pitious Tragedy, of course, but God's will be done. Having lived so long time in highly stingy fashion he is said to have numerous and costly stocks-and-shares including

Port and Harbour Trust Development Coy., Ltd., 8 percentum debentures, also Egyptian cotton manufactures (Sakelliarides) and also Tramways' Extension Project  $5\frac{1}{2}$  percentum-cum-profits, so perhaps, he will surely bequeeth a spanking inheritance to his nearest and dearest, in anticipation whereof I have already bought a splendid walking stick (Malacca gold knob filigree work) and one Century Encyclopædia complete on the hire-instalment bandibast, along with a smart bookshelf to fit of Mahogany timber.



*The amount of diks and troubles incumbent on a (conscientious) paterfamilias under such circs. is almost unbelievable.*

Re. offsprings, my two sons, Hagop and Bogos are quite safe and sound and health pretty robust. What devilish names these are to be sure, I am hating them the more and more, as I grow longer and longer. I myself insisted to call them some grand old Sanskrit names, such (a) Viswamitra Mahavidyalakhshmi or (b) Thakur Shivapati Yudisthira, but Pipi was utterly dogged

on her rotten Armenian nomenclatures, which are a standing eye-sore or rather ear-sore, I should say. Anyhow you will be glad to ascertain that the above two urchins (or rather lads now) are studying up to the 3rd standard in the Sanatan Dharma High School, and are acknowledged by all and sundry to be very sharp youngsters, and have a grand future, owing to good application and acumen.

My two young daughters, (names still a bone of domestical contestation and no final conclusion reached up to date, so as provisional nomenclatures I am calling Dubli and Moti, *i.e.*, Thin and Fat, owing to their physical conformations, respectively) are also quite well thanks, and have reached to the age of  $1\frac{5}{2}$  years, being twins just like Hagop and Bogos. Of course, seeing they are hitherto merely callow infants, so far they have not begun to prosecute their studies, but simply playing idly the livelong day as is the fashion of babies and young children. But Dubli can count very fair on her toes up to 8 or 9, so I prognosticate she will one day be a Nailer at Maths. Moti, however, is rather a dull up-to-date, which is very surprising phenomenon in any family of mine. The truth is that food imbibed seems to go and nourish her obesity rather than her cerebellum, pericranium, medulla-oblongata, etc.

All the same it is rather a perturbatory factor to have two goes of twins, firstly masculine then feminine. It causes one to furiously think what you will have the 3rd time. Mr. Cocky Lemon, my old comrade-of-arms in Mesopotamia, (he was sanitary corporal in the war and for two months acting lance-sergeant, and now settled down in Khushdilpur), says he has read somewhere that in cases like mine the third lot is always twins too, but neither masculine nor feminine, but a mixture. Surely, this can't be true? Correspondence cordially invited, strictly confidential of course. If

true, it is poor look-out. But I have often detected Mr. Lemon in the most unmitigated taradiddles so I do not pay much attention to what I might wittily term his pseudo-biological lucubrations. Anyhow I say with late Mr. Asquith Let us wait and see.

While discussing this matter of children, kids, brats, bairns, etc., what I have always said is that *In Abstract*, they are sweet and lovely things, being as one may say Household Flowers or Domestical Jewels and Pets beyond all price. But kids, etc., *In Concrete* especially in big numbers are not so nice. They are prone to cause awkward ructions, for when young they are insanitary and when older they get cheeky. Mind you, I am not complaining, good Heavens. No, there is no sire or dam on earth who doats on his legitimate offsprings more acutely than I, and I would willingly have 50 or 60.

The fact is that when their mother is there in the house its alright, for she attends to all these businesses concerned with child-rearing, and the gentleman's liesures and privacies are inviolate naturally. But when the mother is absent, like Pipi now in Misr Country, then (as the Pschalmist says) Life becomes a Burden and the Mourners go about the City, or words to that effect. The amount of diks and troubles incumbent on a (conscientitious) paterfamilias under such circs. is almost unbelievable.

I was nearly forgetting to say that not only the mother is away, as per my paras. above, but also (sorrow's crown of sorrow !) Ahoo, the Armenian cook-wench has chosen this very exact epoch to go sick in, which she hasn't done since 12 years ; say rather not sick, but malingering, for I can see plump and plain that the whole thing is a gross affectation. And what then is the (alleged) matter with her you may well ask. Simply swollen feet, caused, so she impudently asserts, owing to running up and downstairs too often and too

fastly. This is a patent falsehood, for there is nothing fast about her. I am quite willing to admit that two to four of her toes seem to be fatter than they would be in a perfectly proportioned female figure, also pinker. But what of that? A temporary fatness or rubescence of a limb or portion of a limb is nothing. Do not many of us bear extremely fat abdomens like Doctor Hatu Ram for instance, and manage quite alright?

Why, when I was on Field Service in "Mespot" on the world-famous and victorious march to Capture of Baghdad, did I complain about my feet which owing to my stupendous feats of walking (or as we say in the Army "marching") were black to say nothing of blue, and so swollen and bloated as to be irrecognizable? Also sceptic in places. But did any of my comrades-of-arms ever hear from my lips a sigh or a belch or a groan? Not at all. On the contrary, I was striding along with my breast extended proudly to its utmost degree, my chin drawn in backwards to my neck and my thumbs pressed neatly along the seams of trowsers, in the approved military attitude for "Attention" as laid down in current regulations. And so, day in night out, I was exemplifying my heroical bull-dog grits to all and sundry, and never mind foods and drinks or agonising pains and excruciations with my clear steadfast gaze ever upon the appointed jail (Baghdad).

I told all this 3 times over and over again to Ahoo, the household drudge, illustrating the terrible nature of my feet compared to hers with coloured diagrams, and appealing vehemently to her better nature. "See," I said to her kindly, "the manifold affairs that are coming to wrack-and-ruin through your sloth and devil-may-care, viz., Kneading of flour, husking of rice, hewing of wood and drawing of water, to say nothing of feeding system of helpless infants gone to pot. Rise then and be about your businesses."

But no, nothing would shame or budge her up from her bed, so in the end I became pardonably shirty and began to rate her in no measured terms, saying, "I see you are an Artful Dodger, and a Pure Sham, lying supine there while in the pink of good health. In fact you are nothing but a Humbugger." Whereupon stung to the quick she absolutely lost her dander and started to her feet (on which kindly note she was not able to stand at all!) seized a pot and made to hurl it upon me with ultra-violent gestures. So perceiving that it was very infra dig, noblesse oblige, etc., to bandy words say nothing of missiles with a mere menial, retired myself from her vicinity sine die.

So then it became a matter of settling down methodically so to *appreciate the situation* as we say in military circles. What were the premises? These are they.

(a) A cultured Hindu gentleman alone in a house with (not to mention twin urchins at School, but they can look to themselves, I'm not going to) another pair of girlish infants requiring at frequent and uncertain intervals foods, drinks, physics, beddings, brushings, scrubbings, scrapings to teeth, wipings of noses, etc., and other attentions too numerous to mention.

(b) Mother gone, and female servant malingering as per my paras. above.

(c) Three pages of foolscap instructions, re kids indited by the mother (Pipi) previously to her recent departure become quite incomprehensible owing to central page blown out of the window by accidental wind.

(d) Doctor Hatu Ram, who might have eased this grave dilemma, (though he would have billed me pretty stiff for his services you may be cocksure) gone to Madras for some vernacular congress, either the Swadeshi Parcharana Sabha, or the Ayurveda

Vidyapith, or perhaps, even the Sri Bharat Dharma Mahamandal, I forget now.

Then suddenly I had an intuition vouchsafed from on high, why not call for help on my old friend, Mr. Cocky Lemon, now part-proprietor of the Nimbu Livery Stables and Hackny Carriage Emporium, Sabzi Mandi, Khushdilpur City? He is man-of-the-world, he has begotten large families in past eras, in fact he has told himself to me that he has "buried seven." He is the very man. No sooner said than done. I chartered a bazar tonga and went off helter-squelter.

When I reached in his "Yard" (a sort of compound) he was there wearing a pink and yellow shirt and Jodhpur trowserings, masticating a long straw and peeping at a large European horse. So I told to him all my wretched plights and pecks of troubles. At first he was inclined to make a poo-hoo to the whole thing, saying that "What are you making all this fuss and fidget? And what do you expect me to do with your kids? Suckle them? If so, you've come to the wrong address."

But gradually my face, hideous with teary woe, won even his flinty heart, and seizing me demi-humorously by the left ear exclaimed, "Now look here, Bitchy my boy, you've got more brains than anyone I know." (This is quite true) "I say you've got more book-learning under that funny little hat o' yours than I'd ever have if I sweated from now to Doomsday. But when there's a job o' *work* to be done with yer 'ands, then you're just about as much use as a\_\_\_\_\_."

Expression used being foul to a degree I shall not sully ears of respectable readers. But I didn't mind one jot because I could see he was beginning to give way. I was right, because he continued to say, "I won't deny you stood by me over that trouble with the Arab woman at Shekh Saad. Well, one good

turn deserves another. So I won't say, No." Whereupon after pinching hind-leg-bones of the large horse in a drastical manner and shaking his head pessimistically, we went off in the tonga.

When I re-entered my dwelling and had a cursory glance at things it was even worse than before. Because the two girl infants had (Goodness knows how, it is a myracle) obtained one tin of Lyle's Golden Syrup nearly full, of which they had eaten some I suppose and the rest was on the swaddling clothes, the beddings, chairs and carpets, and all over their persons especially eyes and hairs. It was a sorry sight and my heart quaked and qualed, but Cocky Lemon was just sniggling and giggling like anything not caring a bit. He said "Now look 'ere Bitchy, if I'm going to deal with this business of fixing up your unmarried daughters and cleaning up the place generally, I don't want you hanging around and pretending to help. Now push off. Run away and pray to your Vishnus and your Mahomeds and then come back in an hour and a half."

Such abyssal ignorance can hardly be excelled, can it? Even our friends the Moslems don't pray to Mahomed but to Allah as everybody knows. However I made no complaint on that account, I was only too happy to relinquish him, and went off and had a nice game of backgammon with the marker at The Khushdilpur Sporting and Dramatical Club for Indian Gentlemen of which I am proud to be one of original members. And I must confess when I got back to home that Mr. Lemon has done wonders and myracles, and I hereby wish to leave on permanent record that if in the past-time I have said some pretty hard things about him (for he can be very nasty at times, no one nastier) I withdraw them all and glad to make amends too, especially as he is coming back to-morrow at the same time.

This was meant to be an Essay on Certain Political and Sociological Problems in Khushdilpur State, and so it is too to a good extent. Anyhow, it is just a WHACKING LIE to say like Doctor Hatu Ram that it is nothing else but "Ayah's Tittle Tattle," and beneath attention of serious peoples. The fact is he is utterly soured and enviable. But a man of my status as a literary publicist can confidently leave the verdict to posterity and treat such obnoxious vapourings with the disdain to which they deserve, for he (the worthy doctor !) has never published 2 lines in all his life, the only article he has submitted (complaint against milk supply in Amritsar) having been turned down by Editor owing to rotten grammars.

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## PIG-STICK-HUNT

My goodness we had some startling to-dos since three four days ago which might have evolved shocking tragedy to self but in lieu just proved plump and plain my sterling grits, and how I upheld the dignity of my nation my caste and my clan to say nothing of the Intelligentzia class too, all Khushdilpur is just agog about it.

I was paying a call to my old "pall" Mr. Cocky Lemon, part proprietor of the Nimbu Livery Stables and Hackny Carriage Emporium, Khushdilpur City in order to hire in due course a small horse or two, such as jennet or palfrey for equitationary practise of my two young-boys, I myself planning to accompany, also riding on horse (of course) but it must be quiet brute and not wild scamp and harumscarum, because I do not approve of such. My host says he has the very exact animal and showed it to me without ado and it seems to be quite alright, its name being Rosinante, age from 25 upwards, and a very steady Hackny not liable to run along at velocity greater than 8 m.p.h. so I have engaged provisionally for self.

Then we begun to indulge in chitterchat and Mr. Lemon said Do you know to-morrow is Anniversary of Capture of Baghdad. We must have something to celebrate it. So he began to mix a "brew" as he said, called Nimbu Cocktail. Now re alcoholics my rule, well-known to all and sundry, is to eschew all such beers, wines and spirits as being deleterious to human system, but since he said "Not a belly-ache in a gallon of it" I said "Thanks awfully I will drink a dram with you in conviviality so long as it may not form precedent." It was certainly tasty stuff and, as my host claimed, "warmed the cockles" Since writing the above it has

come to my notice that I am not sure what cockles precisely are (dictionary is silent) so if I have innocently repeated a turn of phrase that is immodest or lewd in conception, I am very sorry to prudish readers, the blame if any must be laid to Mr. Lemon's door as originator.

Seeing more extra glasses etc. on table, I enquired from Mr. C. Lemon that are you anticipating visitors, to which he said "Yes, One Indian Gentleman, Thakur Prithvi Singh and his cousin name unknown, coming to consult about horses for a Pig-Stick Club. He is not a fellow I cotton to much. He's a born sportsman—that I will allow. He's shot or stabbed or speared or disembowelled almost every blessed animal that can run or swim or fly or crawl; but he never stops yapping about it, that's what gets my goat. He's shared a grouse-moor or a deer-forest or something with Lord Lonsdale, so he says, and he's lunched at Buckingham Palace, and gone chamoix-hunting with an Italian prince or emperor I forget now exactly. I'm getting a bit tired of it but he brings business, so I don't want to quarrel with him."

I said "From what you describe, he seems a very vain-glorious braggart, say rather a pukka braggadocio," to which my host replied that he would sooner call him just a plain buckstick. Whereat I remarked sagely that two can play at that game. If he brags himself, then I shall brag myself too, and let us see who brags best. At that very moment they came in and I saw in half a tick that the Thakur Sahib was stuck-up La-di-Da and coxcomb, just the sort of chap who always blows his own strumpet, day in night out, and sure enough, as foretold by Mr. Lemon, began to strut and prate about his everlasting shikar. His cousin on the second hand was a more silent man I have ever met, never opening his mouth except to place within it some Nimbu cocktail.

In a short while Mr. Prithvi Singh turned to me saying "And you Sir are you a sportsman too?" as though to say "If you aren't then Wo betides you." Inwardly I was pardonably nettled but outwardly evinced a highly dignified mien.

Conversation as per seq :—

(*Self*) Yes certainly I have shot perilous games and pursued after precarious quarries from my tenderest years. To me Shikar is Breath of Life itself.

(*Thakur*) *highly surprised.* Oh indeed? What games please?

(*Self*) *with a light laugh.* What games have I shot? It would be easier to reply if you said what games have you *not* shot. My triumphs have been innumerable. For instance The King of Beasts, alias Felis Leo, commonly called the Lion. I have shot him so often times that I have quite lost computation how many.

(*Thakur*) *clearly out of countenance.* Oh indeed? and how did you shoot those lions?

(*Self*) Why, with a gun naturally. You would not pursue after a Lion with a catapult, or arrows and bows I presume?

(*Thakur*) *getting shirty.* No, I mean where was all this? And what shikar bundobast did you have. Did you sit up over a kill, or did—

(*Self*) I may tell you that in the unknown savage parts of Araby, as we say Mesopotamia, vast herds of lions lurk in caves and hollow trees, from which they rush out roaring awfully upon luckless travellers and chew them to pieces. It was I who rid the world of this frightful scourge and in those parts I am known as Saviour of Country. First I would find their lairs and then entering single-handed I

would fight it out to the death. If they were not at home, I would trace them pitilessly over hill and dale scanning their tracks *i.e.* spoor, droppings etc., and when I had attained them shooting them stone dead with one shot through the brain-pan never once missing.

Now I ought perhaps to admit that all this, and a lot more I said, was not quite true altogether. Certainly I have hunted once or twice and quite fearlessly but not to this extent. But if I did mention some exaggerations, was it not fully justifiable with such a Swaggerer and Dandiprat like Prithvi Singh? It is no good telling him the bare truth; he would just sneer at you for a simpleton. I am not sure whether or no he believed me absolutely. For instance, when in reply to his querry that What was the size of your biggest lion, I said Just over five yards from tip of nose to tip of tail. This of course was just a guess, on which he began to guffaw in an up-roarious fashion. Seeing I had made a false step I corrected my measurement saying it should have been five *feet*, not *yards*. On which he laughed even more.

Also I am not sure whether he believed me when I said that during Great War I had 72 lion skins altogether, all stored in Advanced Base Supply Depot, Baghdad, and all except two eaten by crickets common, on which I was so disgusted that I gave those two to the coolie jemadar of Depot so had none left to show him. But whether he believed me or not, he could not disprove it or deny it openly, which is the main thing in a contest for boasting.

After a while sitting rather moody he turned to me sharply and exclaimed "Are you a pig sticker"? Now here I made a rash blunder, I should have restricted my vauntings to such preys as Lions African, Bears Polar, or Bears Grisly, Gorillas, Anacondas, Sharks, Hippopotamuses, and such other ferocious denizens as

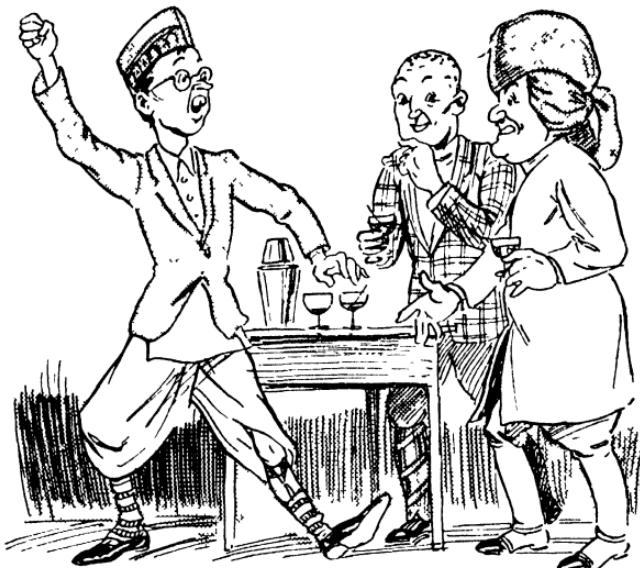
were *not* current on the spot and hence liable to verification or even flat contradiction by Thakur Sahib. The Indian Pig or Vernacular Sur was the last thing I should boast my prowess, for of course re. Pigs Thakur Sahib was a Paragon. I could easily have replied (and should have) "As orthodox Hindu, I recoil from Pigs disgustedly being a dirty mammal and ceremoniously impure. I should not sully my hands with them, indeed just as soon volunteer for municipal sweepers job, No thanks, I am not a Pig-spearer on any account."

In lieu of all this I said exactly the opposite. I know not what germ of rashness or temerarity was in my blood for by wont I am a prudent fellow. I was doubtless inspired by a Reckless Daredevilry and in reply to querry propounded, stated "If your intention is to stick pigs with spears or any other ferocious pachyderm then you have come to the right man. My proficiency in this sport is notorious, and I am passionately addicted. Indeed there has been talk over my going to Europe Country to coach H. R. H. Prince of Wales and Duke of Orleans in this splendid sport. Come on then, I am your man, etc., etc."

Thakur Sahib with a nasty leer said "As soon as you like. We are even now planning to seek for The Mighty Boar in the old river bed beyond the Fort this very afternoon. And here at this door we have everything necessary viz: spears both "overarm" and "underhand," which you like, and even a medical pannier and bandages, and as for horse Mr. Lemon will doubtless supply to you, is it not so?"

Even then it was not too late to respond that very sorry this afternoon I am engaged to have all my teeth extracted by dentist, or my wife is expecting a family, or any such current excuse. But No. Quite on the other hand I sprang to my feet with a glad cry, "Hurrah! Hurrah! To horse! To horse!" With that I seized another dram of the Nimbu Cocktail, and swigged it

boldly. Any other man might have been a blue funk at such a parlous prospect but not me. Indeed I was myself surprised at my *Furor Indicus* (Latin) and *Sang Froid* (French).



*I sprang to my feet with a glad cry, o, "Hurrah! Hurrah!  
To horse! To horse!"*

We set out at 4 post meridiem punct. I being rather in the van, bearing a huge spear athwart on my saddle bow, a very difficult acrobatic with a horse to attend to too. Cocky Lemon still very astonished at my brave pluck insisted to accompany on a small horse behind hand. I soon found that Rosinante was a quiet nice nag, and soon began to trot, urging the others to hasten quickly etc., etc. In this trotting business, the important factor is to get the "Raise," so as to conform to motions of horse. Almost at once I attained this "Raise" and C. Lemon was clearly very pleased at my agility and horsemanship.

Soon after we came into jungle district and I gave vent to sporting cries as are *De Rigor* among European

Nimrods viz : " Hey Ho Chivy ! Tally Hoo ! Yoicks ! Tantivy, Tantivy !" Then suddenly I espied through the bushes what clearly was an enormous Boar (male swine) of black hue. I will admit freely I firstly felt a sickening qualm, pardonable, nay commendable in a married man depending on one wife and many helpless infants. But it was only for a moment, and the next I was thundering along like mad at a good rousing trot after that awful quarry. Whether he was terrified by my loud shouts, I cannot say but apparently vanished into an adjacent hole in the ground, and coming round the corner I saw ahead a " donky " or ass going along, and so as to force it to make my way I gave a strong prcd with my spear quite inadvertently and forgetting about that it was so sharp and deadly. This pierced into " donky's " right rump and staid there fixedly.

The result was I received a tremendous thump in the stomachic regions from handle of spear and alighted topsy-turvy to the ground. No horseman on earth could have withstood such an overwhelming concussion and re this Cocky Lemon cordially agrees. Of course further hunting was quite ultra vires in spite of my keen disappointment, and Mr. Lemon definitely forbad it in interests of Rosinante. Also there was the ass to attend to. It might be thought he was a wild ass *i.e.* jungle or desert variety, but this was not so. He was a domesticated one, his master by funny coincidence being dhobi of Doctor Hatu Ram. This dhobi evinced the utmost impudence to me demanding as damages Rs. 100 !! He will be lucky if he gets Rs. 3. He ought to be thankful his ass was not killed altogether, blocking the public path like that to sportsmen ridding the country of such noxious plagues to mankind.

Re self, glad to report no bones broken, but Doctor Hatu Ram has diagnosed " Ecchymosis and Extravasation of Pleural Tissue." But I am bearing up bravely, we sportsmen must expect hard knocks. However I

must say I am displeased with Doctor Hatu Ram. He actually takes sides with his dhobi (!) and has the cool effrontery to say I was drunk and incapable in charge of a horse. A dignitary silence is the best answer to this.

All this goes to show that these fire-eaters like Thakur Prithvi Singh and his sort of kidney had better not take liberties with members of the so-called un-warlike classes (what an invidious distinction) who are every whit as Ready-Aye-Ready to undertake perilous quests and deeds of Derring-Do as anybody else and more so very likely.

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## UNCLE SUNSHINE

As every body knows, I just doat on my dear Wife Pipi. Indeed my love towards her is absolutely erotic, but sorry to say not affectionately addicted to her half-brother Han (short for Hovhannes) recently reached along with her from Egypt Country. He is lazy drone. Also loose Fish and Fast-Dog (sexually). Thirdly, he is always trying to sponge out cash from Pipi and self.

Why should I donate him cash indeed? Are there not far better objects and subjects for philanthropical disbursements than such an Armenian slacking loafer? For instance E. G. Financial Assistance to young tyros in Indian Dramatical or Rhetorical Art, which being a very laudable avocation, I have decided to patronise, and published a notice accordingly in Khushdilpur Gazette only since 2 or 3 weeks. Altogether so far 151 replies to this Advert, and am thoroughly dealing through them seriatim. One of them is received from a poor fatherless young girl named Miss Gul Saffa, who is yearning to stage-act for Indian cinematographical "Films," saying she is practising for 2½ years dancing, miming, mumming, singing, acrobatics, etc., but no spare cash for fashionable cloths, fall-lalls, jew-jaws, also railway ticket to Calcutta, so her chances are utterly ruined by penurious beggary. Surely this is a very deserving and pitious dilemma, isn't it, so have taken appropriate action, but *re* such delicate negotiations, much better say nothing to Pipi, least said best mended, because she is (sexually) a very jealous character, and prone to inter-nuptial ructions and bad tantrums.



*A large lady on the opposite side seeming to be peeping towards me.*

This young girl was arranged by letter to meet with me at Vernacular Cook-Shop and Eating-House in Bazaar, wearing for identificatory purposes, a trowsers, (*i.e.*, shalwar) of green velvet with gold lace bottoms, and a red rose stuck at her bosom, (*e.g.*, corsage) and I saw in half a tick that she was even more deserving case than I thought, face or physiognomy being more blooming as the Dewy Rose from which she derives her nomenclature (*Gul*), voice resembling a first class nightingale, and eyes like a female faun, (*i.e.*, shy, but not *so* shy). Also her behaviours are highly winsome just like a lovely young cat. She said if some beneficous gentleman (or lady of course) will give her an A.I. rig-out of togs and all exes to Calcutta, in 2 months she will be the “Queen of The Flickers,” *i.e.*, a sort of Prima Donna only more so.

So we went off to Messrs. Kirpa Ram & Co., Oriental Silk Mercers, Indian Ladies Haberdashers, etc., and Mr. Kirpa Ram was very kind certainly, giving personal attention to every item, and treating me with great deferentiation. Take a chair here, or a cup of

tea there and cognate civilities. The names for these ladies' "toilettes" at such Bon-Ton Emporiums are always French not English (why?) such as Peignoir, Chemise, Kimono, Troussu, Camisole, etc., so rather a pukka puzzle to understand at first what they mean. Also the prices are a crying shame, and when chance occurred I ventilated this financial criticism to Mr. Kirpa Ram's private ear. But he said Film Stars must have the very best, otherwise the Manager won't take them, so I said no more. As for numbers, My Gracious Goodness, you would think that 3 or 4 female shirts or shifts (called chemises vide above) would suffice, but not in the least. You must have one dozen at the minimum. As for long silky stockings you must have even more, they weigh less than a tola but cost is Rs. ten! There was one fortunate thing, *viz.*, Miss G. Saffa has very small dimensions bodily, *i.e.*, chest 29, waist 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ , hips 31 (all inches, carefully measured by me myself). What if she had been the same dimensions as Pipi, just double this about? Then the bill would have been too much, even for my generosity.

So then after about 2 hours measuring and snipping and pinning, etc., Miss Gul Saffa went away, so she, said, to tend her ailing mother, blowing and wafting kisses (absolutely pure and chaste of course) to her "Uncle Sunshine" which she is calling me, meaning to say a gentleman resembling a near relative who has brought rays of sunshine into a life that so far has been dark and shady. Also she donated me the Red Red Rose from her bosom. As for there being any faintest thought of LOVE, why it is absurd patently, I regard her as my dear Niece and she does me *vice versa*, and *mutatis mutandis*.

As I was cordially saying good afternoon and Tata to Mr. Kirpa Ram who really is a very amiable merchant, they were unpacking one box "Straight from Paris" and Mr. Kirpa Ram took out what he said was a "Chef

D'œuvre de lingerie" (French again) and certainly it was a lovely costume composed of "bodice" (as we say *choli*) and "knickers" combined into one. He said: "You Sir have been lavish customer, I shall throw this in for lucks, and you can give to your niece, for it is her size exactly."

So accepting his nice gift very warmly I put it in my pocket and went off to my new mansion. As I was walking along very gaily in the next street, I saw a large lady on the opposite side seeming to be peeping towards me, but covering herself up with an umbrella. All I could see was her skirt of plush stuff, purplish colour, and some thick boots. *Now this is exactly what Pipi is wearing nearly always.* My Heavens how I gave a start, and became utterly faint and sickly. The more I looked askance through my fingers, (pretending of course to be looking otherwise and elsewhere) by so much the more I was certainly positive that large lady is my wife indeed, and spying my comings-out and goings-in. Surely a rather shameful act to do, Eh? also unladi-like.

Besides, my internal conscience was utterly blameless as the driven snow, on the contrary, highly commendable for kindness and generosity to one poor fatherless young girl in a nasty stew. However no good telling all that to Pipi, she will never understand these sociological problems, argue as you will. No, my dear ladies, you have many nice good virtues, but the prerogative of Logics you have never got.

So at the next corner, while she was tracking me along by stealth (still sculking under that brolly) I made up my mind in a trice and sprang off simultaneously with the velocity of a wind, just like a fleet deer, round another corner, into the Camel-Serai, out the other side, and soon reached in my family mansion rather breathless but highly gratified all the same to escape by my

good ingenuity and athletical agility from a thoroughly ticklish quandary.

So then I urgently ordered the mali or vernacular gardener if anyone will ask what time I came in, you must say about 2 hours ago, otherwise you will have the sack *ek dum*. After which I got some bird-seed and sugar-lumps and ran to my Aviary (Birds Cages) where I have a "hobbie" to rear some nice minahs, tits, canary-birds, poll-parrots, and other feathered songsters, and began to feed those pet birds. What I thought was this that if Pipi may still nourish suspicions against my honour, she will see me in this innocent and pretty task, and her suspicions will melt away into empty air and she will be very sorry. Besides the mali will corroborate my *bona-fides*, also *alibis*.

Sure enough in she came, presenting a very inflamed physiognomy, and pores perspiring freely, (athletically Pipi is C<sub>3</sub> Class as they say in U.K. or even lower if they have any lower) and impotent to enunciate distinctly for about 4 minutes, except what I might term mouthing. Then a terrible conversation transpired.

*Pipi* (still gasping) "Where have you been, you vile adulterator"?

*Self* (feeling very fearful inside but making as though to smirk in a jolly fashion) "My dear, I am feeding Our Feathered Friends, these dear dickie-birds, since 1 or 2 hours. I am afraid lest that yellow one is moulting itself. What do you say?"

*Pipi* (no attention to Bird-topic, her face even more redder) "So you deny you were at Kirpa Ram's ten minutes ago?"

(My Good God the anguish I felt at these crucial words. It is a poignant memory still.)

*Self* (with a start of bemusement) "Kirpa Ram, my dearest sweetie? . Who or what is Kirpa Ram?"

*Pipi* (appearing about to burst herself) " So you don't know Kirpa Ram ! You don't know Gul Saffa !! You haven't spent hundreds and thousands of my money—*my* money—on trash for a trashy wanton ? ! ! "

This was certainly strong language indeed. But deeming it clearly unsuitable opportunity to defend the moral reputation of Miss G. Saffa, I merely spoke back to her gently and sweetly.

*Self* " My dear pet, you seem to be rather beside yourself and labouring under hallucinations owing to the heated nature of your blood. If you will just seat yourself down, I will seek a nice glass of sherry-white-wine which always alleviates you, and also fan you with a hand punkhah, and with pleasure, no trouble in the least."

*Pipi* (showing her teeth and grasping her umbrella like a dagger or short-sword) Can't remember exactly what all she said, but anyhow she rushed along and began to rumple me all over with violence, then suddenly uttered a piercing cry and began to wave in the air what I thought was a flag.

But it wasn't a flag, it was that damnable " Chef D'œuvre de Lingerie " which she had rummaged out from my pocket. I tried to say, this is for you, for your birthday present (distant about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  months, worse luck) so she seized that Lingerie and laying it against her bust proved me with furious sort of grimaces that it wouldn't go  $\frac{1}{2}$  round her even. She then began to tear and rend it asunder, spitting and stamping simultaneously, so seeing she was quite out of temper. I just ran off once again as fastly as I could while her back was turned away, without another word, and arrived to the Backsgammon and Billiards Room of the Khushdilpur Social and Dramatical Club for Indian Gentlemen where I am now penning these lines with a heavy heart.

My old friend Doctor Hatu Ram is here too by chance and he has told me some more nasty news. This is what he says : " Why, all Khushdilpur knows that Gul Saffa is a bazaar trollop, *i.e.*, vernacular cocotte. She and your Han have been committing irregularities since many weeks. Doubtless this Han knew about your Advert. in the Gazette, and has suborned his guilty paramour to squeeze the Goose that lays golden eggs. Why, all this time you have been paying the Piper, while Han has been playing the tune. Uncle Sunshine indeed ! Faugh and Pschaw, you are an old fool."

This is what Hatu Ram says : I can't believe it, but all the same it makes me feel very uneasy and queasy. Doctor Sahib very kindly is gone to see what's up now, and whether I should return to home safely, or remain absconding *sine die*. For the present, the future is very dark and gloomy. No more just now.

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# THE LOSSIEMOUTH LURCHER

Owing to grevious rows and ructions with my dear wife Pipi, all along of a young-girl called Miss Gul Saffa (in whose connection kindly note, I was more innocent as young lamb or even dove) sorry to say Pipi has evicted me out from my splendid new mansion and obliged to return into my rotten old house in bazaar, whi h is a crying shame and sickening dilemma. Doctor Hatu Ram keeps on telling that Sorrow and Suffering purge the Human Heart from all dross and trash, which is highly provoking for my heart does not require any cleansing or purification in the least, quite on the contrary.

Residing in the next house is one European young-man who is rather a puzzle socialogically. He says name is Honorary Montmorency Massingberd, but Mr. Cocky Lemon says No. He is just common private soldier having committed desertion and hiding himself away from military apprehension. Anyhow, with him is a tremendous pet-dog keeping guard at the door like chowkidar, never sleeping and slumbering one wink, but barking and bellowing against anyone who should try to enter such house. He is clearly a very rare dog about as big as a small lion his former parts being coloured khaky and posterior parts black and yellow also other peculiar circumstances too numerous to mention his name being Snitch.

Naturally in the beginning I was rather fearful against this great dog but after few days he began recognising me quite jolly, wagging his tail and hinder parts which in canine brutes is well known to be a gesture of

love and affection. But as for strangers, Good Heavens, if not chained fastly, he would try to rend and chew them to death, being utterly furious and choking himself nearly, and in this connection his master is instigating him very warmly, crying out *Soo! Soo! Attaboy! See him off! Worry, Worry, Worry, Worry!* etc., etc. So far, about 7 human beings including kids have sustained some sharp bitings, but nowadays pedestrian traffic has ceased in vicinity.

One day Honorary M. Massingberd, Esq. (or whoever is he) came to me saying I am decided to return to U. K. *ek dum* and I cannot take my dear dog. As he is a faithful friendly hound and you have a kind face, will you like to take him free and gratis? Being rather astonished and never having reared a domestical dog previously to date, I enquired what breed (*i.e.*, genius, species, etc.), is he?

So after some humming and hahing Honorary Massingberd said He is a "Lossiemouth Lurcher," one of the rarest breeds in the world and worth how much he didn't like to say for fear of exaggerations. He also informed to me that his maternal uncle H. E. Duke of Devonshire (who is a notorious breeder and rearer, and world-famous for his unique especiality of dachshund dogs having six legs in lieu of four) is mad keen to have this "Snitch," but please don't sell him under 200 pounds, I put you on your honour.

So in the end I said in my heart, What's the harm? It is a free gift and he is clearly a very faithful hound and devoted to duty thus saving wages of Chowkidar, even if Duke of Devonshire doesn't purchase him. So I replied Thanks Awfully, I will accept this beast gladly provided you will donate his collar also and iron chain. To this Hon. Massingberd agreed, ringing my hands warmly, and stating that all he wanted was pukka receipt for dog in duplicate, otherwise it would be illegal. So he penned that receipt straitaway and I signed it, little

recking for half a tick that I might be signing my death-warranty. Soon after this Hon. Massingberd in a stealthy manner (so as to keep his departure secret from his dear Snitch) went off in a bazar hackney-carriage to Rly. Station.

After about 2 hours I was feeding some tasty snacks of flesh to that dog, and there was a loud pat-a-pat and rub-a-dub occurred on my door. Chaining up Snitch who was mad with blood-thirsty ferocity, I went to open and there saw to great astonishment Captain Hassan Shah, Chief of Police, and three vernacular constables bearing staves and poles. Captain Sahib said Is that your dog, pointing to Snitch? I said Yes why do you ask?

He said Then it is my duty to charge you under sections 14, 21B, and 71A of Penal Code, videlicet Nurturing a savage beast to the danger of the public weal. Also on yesterday evening by incitements, wantonly and of malice aforethought, causing said beast to bite, tear, and rend, the persons of citizens of this Realm of Khushdilpur, to wit among others the person (especially legs) Of Sir Ardeshir Hormuzji, Wazir-i-Wazarat and Prime Minister of this Realm, who is now at the gate of death and if he dies of said wounds you will also be charged under section 101, Wilful Murder.

Of course my conscience being utterly clean, I replied with a calm and scornful mien You are doing a bad blunder Captain Sahib, so be careful please. Yesterday afternoon this dog-master was not me, but Hon. Massingberd (next house) to whom you should kindly direct all enquiries and not *dik* me, being quite irresponsible. I received this dog named Snitch only since two hours ago as free gift from Hon. Massingberd, Esq. (next house as already stated).

Captain Sahib then drew a paper from his pocket saying "I have already pursued enquiries from that

gentleman at the Railway Station. Are you admitting this is your signature?" I looked at the paper and saw it to be my (duplicate) receipt. I said Yes, certainly that is my signature. Captain Sahib then said "Look at the date please." Again I looked at that receipt, and there, quite plainly in Hon. Massingberd's writing, the date was *not to-day (Monday 16th) but Friday, 13th inst. i.e., three days before.*

Gradually the awful enormity of that Reptile-and-Viper Hon. Massingberd became aware to me, clearly he had become rather funky about these numerous bitings, and determined to lay blame on me by extracting this fraudulent receipt; so emitting a loud and ghastly cry I fell down in fits, *i.e.* became swooned and senseless.

..... The next thing I was aware was Doctor Hatu Ram feeding me some warm gruel of arrowroots with a wood spoon. He said do not trouble yourself so hardly my dear chap. I am pursuing enquiries from legal luminaries and they say if Sir Ardeshir Hormuzji kicks the bucket it will not be Murder but only Culpable Homicide. This he appeared to consider was very good news. Faugh and Pshaw. What a Job's Comfort he is to be sure.

These next three four days were the most awful of my whole life-time. The Medical News (*i.e.*, bulletins) *re:* Sir Ardeshir Hormuzji was terrible. One day his artery has punctured and "haemorrhage" is setting in. Another day he is sceptic and both his legs must be dissected off. Another time No, it is not scepticism but galloping rabies and he is snapping and snarling like dog. All this time I was lying on my bedstead peaking and pining in a sort of palsy.

On Friday, 20th inst., I was thus miserably lying when Doctor Hatu Ram came running that a distinguished visitor, with motor, is desirous to converse to you, at the same time bringing his visiting-card which

I perused being "Lala Jagat Narain, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Khushdilpur State". I said What does he want with me, but Doctor Sahib didn't know, only that his business was strictly confidential.

Lala Sahib was a small fattish gentleman with a very laughable face always smirking and smiling and crackling jokes and funs of all sorts, and talking away so fastly that neither Doctor Sahib nor self could say even one word. Firstly he shook my hands very affectionately, saying You must arise up and take some nourishing foods. Secondly, is that the dog that did the biting? (pointing to Snitch, who sat in the corner, and winking and leering his eye at me in a very roguish fashion).

"If that is the famous dog, I have brought him a nice present." and with that gave to me a lovely magnificent canine collar made of rich silver-work and jewellery on which was inscribed "For Fidelity." Of course all this procedure was a total enigma to me.

Lala Sahib then said "You will be glad to hear Sir Ardeshir Hormuzji has been evacuated sick to Europe to get immediate treatments from famous Austrian physician, being a dogbiting specialist. So His Highness the Nawab Sahib has very graciously ordered to me to form a new Cabinet and I have reserved to myself portfolios of Wazir-i-Wazarat and Home Minister. So pray do not agitate yourself about this silly business with police. I have informed to them if you dik Mr. Piche Lal any more, you shall answer to me. Also I have ordered that a handsome honorarium should be disbursed to you out of Police Funds on account of wrongful arrest and frivolous vexation."

All this time my poor brain-pan was so buzzing with bewilderment that I didn't know if I may be dreaming or what-not. After this Lala Sahib in a very jocular fashion shrugged me in my ribs saying with another wink at me "Shahbash! Bhai, shahbash!"

Bravo! You did a noble act when you set your good dog to, bite old Ardeshir Hormuzji. He was a nasty villain and everyone is highly delighted he has taken his hook. If you would like to accept Office under the new Government I will gladly offer you the post of Inspector-of-Girls-Schools as I hear you are rather addicted to girls." (This apparently was in reference in Miss G. Saffa, see para 1 above).

Before I could even say one word Lala Sahib gave me another waggish wink and a second poke in the ribs and left the apartment giggling vociferously.

The above is a very incredulous story, but absolutely true. Sir Ardeshir Hormuzji is gone off sick to Europe Country (no legs dissected so far), and Lala Sahib, as he avers quite truly, is the new Prime Minister. In my opinion a glorious new era (say rather epoch) is opening before our vista in this state of Khushdilpur. I shall certainly accept the Inspectorship-of-Girls-Schools, for Education of the young is my special forte (say rather fortissimo), also I am liking girls better than boys, so it is a very suitable appointment, but whether Pipi will be so delighted as I, is hard to say. Doctor Hatu Ram and Mr. Cocky Lemon are utterly agog over the whole business. Mr. Lemon, who is rather a religious chap, has given his opinion that (a) Out of Evil Good may come. Also that (b) God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. I quite agree with both (a) and (b).

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## BOS BUBALUS OR BUFFALO-BULL

O ! thou green-Eyed Monster of (Sexual) Jealousy what a terrible curse and botheration art thou, who sunderest in twain two loving hearts (*i.e.*, husband and wife) and steepest them to the lips in bitter-galls-and-worm-woods ! And all this time my Inner Consciousness in connection with that young girl Miss Gul Saffa was pure as the driven snow, even more so. But would my dear wife Pipi believe that ? Not one whit or jot indeed, just saying over and over you are a vile adulterator and no bones about it.

So all this time I was divorced neck and crop from my lovely nice mansion (to say nothing of my wife and consort) and living pell-mell and hurley-burly in rotten " shantie " in bazaar. Let alone Love or Uxoricusses, why, I hadn't even pice to buy my daily bread, while Pipi with pots of cash was wallowing in all the Flesh-Pots of Moab which is a revolting quandarry as every " Benedict " will concur.

Well anyhow, one day crushed to the dust by above Carking-Canker-Worm-of-Care I was perusing lugubriously Advert. Columns of Khushdilpur Gazette containing some reference of *Buffalo Bulls*. In a tick (inspired from Heaven doubtless) a flash of Genius came into my brain-pan. Long ago, sometime before Pipi was born, Her (Armenian) mother was run after by a Buffalo Bull for  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, so Pipi always averred, and therefore she, (Pipi) was always awfully funky against those brute beasts ever after, in fact an absolute Hobgoblin and Bugaboo. She is not a funky lady in ordinary things (far from it) but re buffalos she is quite

aghast. Far be it to censure her, for even in our Holy Books the Buffalo is the token of Rage and Fury.

What if she were now pursued by a Buffalo Bull (not seriously of course just trivially) and I happen to be just on that spot and with my dogged grit and pluck may rescue her at very risk of life and limb? Would not that cause her hitherto stony bosom to melt into rosy rhapsodies and raptures, *e.g.*, falling on my neck and loving me for ever and ever more, as her Hero and Paladin of Romance? Surely the answer is in the affirmative.

With me to-think is to-act, so straitaway I hied myself off to have a chat with my butter-and-milk-vendor, named Baggu. He is just a neat-herd really, quite unerudite, in fact a bucolical clodhopper, but as he rears an extensive flock of buffalos, also I owe him two months bills for supplying milk, etc., so clearly he was the very man for my job. I found him in the midst of many buffalos gathering up dung-cakes in his cowyard. Conversation as per seq (Approx.).

SELF (affably). Goodmorning Baggu. Have you by chance one buffalo bull who is fierce, but not *so* fierce, who shall chase a certain person that I shall specify to you? Please treat this as confidential.

BAGGU (scratching his head): There is old Ganga Ram over there. He is old and churlish. There is no trouble to make him chase someone. He will do that gladly without any encouragement. But who is this person? And remember if he is to be killed, you will have to pay me highly, also cash in advance, no tick.

SELF (horrified to depth of my soul): *Killed*, you utter villain? What mean you? Do you take me for a *Murder*? If this person I speak of has even one toe-nail deformed, you are answerable to *Me* and to the Law. I would not have one hair of her dear head disarranged. I only want to give her a

sharp fright, on which by chance I shall appear and rescue her and cause her to love me madly for my noble behaviour and derring-do.

BAGGU (smirking and winking) : So it's a lady ? Ah ! Ahah ! How shall I know her, Sahib ? and where is all this tamasha to happen ?

SELF : Do not be impudent please, and listen attentively. Every afternoon this lady (who is my espoused wife) is taking a promenade for fresh airs to the water-pond at the end of Municipal Gardens, where there is that old baradari. She will be propelling one baby-carriage, called in European nomenclature "Perambulator," in which will be two callow infants. She is a lady of sumptuous proportions and dons a very large parti-coloured hat adorned with agricultural products such as fruits, flowers, feathers, etc., and thick boots. She will also bear a large umbrella. You must be there with your flocks of buffalos, and what you must do is this. Point out this lady to your bull Ganga Ram and cause him to be antagonised towards her.

BAGGU : How do you mean antagonised ?

SELF (rather shirty) : Why, 'use your gumption man. Surely you who live with these buffalos day in night out, and are half a buffalo yourself, can manage so that old Ganga Ram begins to snort and rumble as bulls are wont to do when they are about to make an onset ?

BAGGU : Yes, I can do that. If I prod him with my goad or tie his tail in a thumb-knot, he will certainly snort and rumble as you say, *i.e.*, tossing his head, digging earth with his horns, and other savage antics. Is that what you want ?

SELF : Yes, the more he curvets and cavorts himself the better, and after that he must chase and prosecute this lady to some extent, bounding forward

with bellows, on which you must become vanished in the shrubberies while I spontaneously emerging from an ambush shall assume charge of the situation.

BAGGU: Oh? what then will you do?

SELF: Do? Why I shall drive off this impending monster and rescue that miserable lady from his ravening maw. What else indeed? If you do all this exactly as stated, you will receive Rs. 5 (in the end sorry to say emoluments fixed at Rs. 15, plus old Macintosh cape, Baggu being a highly avaricious skinflint).

On that very day (afternoon time) everything was planned out and ready. My own ambush place was a Bushery called Rhododendron, just near that old baradari, to which Pipi was wont to sander daily. Behind me was that buffalo-flock, commanded by their neat-herd Baggu, also all waiting and ready. All I had to guard my life's blood and my dear ones was one fanciful Malacka-cane walking-stick (silverband filigree) so it shows what a daring fellow I am, doesn't it? Also that creeping and crouching (in Bush) incurred me a nasty twist in my neck vertebraes but I didn't care.

After about 3 to 4 persons had passed at a loiter, I decried from afar off a large pedestrian lady dressed



*This of course was my time to exude from the Rhododendrons.*

in purple costumery, propelling a perambulator, and bearing aloft large red and yellow umbrella. Seeing this, my heart was suffused with gladness, *i.e.*, this is clearly the veritable Finger of Fate, for as everybody knows Bovine Bulls are utterly mad against this colour of red, now I thought all this business will certainly go off like a cracker-jack.

So it did to start with, for Pipi-cum-pram came round that corner, and there stamping on the ground and lowing at her in a fearful fashion was old Ganga Ram. Even I, a brave man, began to quake and quail rather. As for Pipi, being of course a mere female woman, she vented a number of screams and began to rush along back to town dragging that pram behindways at a spanking velocity, soon after passing by my ambush-place in a cloud of dust.

This of course was my time to exude from that Rhododendron, which I did, crying out to her "Do not fear, never mind, I am here to guard you safely, you and our two dear ones." With that, Pipi turned backwards and began to peer at me with amazement, while I stood there with a calm and intrepid mien, kissing my hand to her in a very affectionate fashion.

As I did so, I heard a fearful snort-and-bellow just behind my left elbow. You will hardly believe it, that devilish brute far from pursuing after Pipi (in despite of red umbrella and all) was pursuing after *me* in lieu. Leaping aside with incredible agility I began to run too, what else was there to do, no human mortal can sustain the onrush of mad buffalos howsoever brave and stout he be.

Of my runnings, jumpings, with that ponderous pachyderm scampering after, I shall say no more. The distance thus sprinted was over two miles easily, in and out of those flower "beds" (mostly antirrhinum, calceoaliarias, and love-in-a-mist so far as I could see) then (twice) into that baradari and out again for the

doors were so wide that brute came skipping up the steps and inside too. Anyhow, at the last my legs tripped up, and I fell downwards right in the monster's very orbit.

After that sorry to say, don't know exactly what happened, for I was so hardly pommelled this way and that, in a sort of whirlwind, and in the end incurred a wellnigh fatal smack on my back-of-head (occiput) which to my utter amazement I saw was dealt not by buffalo at all but large red umbrella, *i.e.*, brolly. So then I saw Pipi towering above me engaged in hand to hand fist-i-cuffs not only with that bull, but also some cows, calves, heifers, etc., too, what's more she utterly vanquished them, poking and thwacking and rumpling them with her brolly until she drove them down into the water-pond, where they remained cowering subaqueously.

When she returned to me lying and groaning supinely, I never thought that the loving programme I had myself planned out would in fact come to fruition. But that is exactly what happened, *viz.*, that with tears of joy and gladness she fell on my (bleeding) neck exclaiming "Where are you hurt, my Sweetie Honeysuckle?". Also Soul's Delight, Mummie's Rose-Bud, Heart's Darling, and even more tendery endearments.

So in the end we wended our way backwards in each other's arms to "Shiv Lodge" my commodious Mansion where I am penning these lines with left arm in Hospital sling, 5 bits of sticking plaster, one cold compress (with jaconet) and three bandages (medicated cotton wool) but awfully happy all the same.

Mr. Cockey Lemon having heard I had been disembowelled with a musth elephant came to "call" and says he thinks it's all for the best, and very likely if I (as arranged) had rescued Pipi and not Pipi rescued me, she would not be nearly so doting on me. He also states "Women are Kittle Cattle," though whatever

he means by this Goodness Knows, unless some reference to these stirring events with the buffalos. Anyhow any impartial critic will agree doubtless Pipi has behaved like a true and noble Virago. In my opinion the exploits of these Occidental heroines such as Grace Darling, Florence Nightingale, Mrs. Pankhurst, Amy Johnson, etc., when compared with Pipi will be found to be merely a flash in the bed-pan.

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## KID-KNAPPED

Now this story is about Han, alias Hovhannes Tokatlian, my nasty Armenian half-brother-in-law, sorry to say worse luck who is absolutely the most felonious of God's (?) creatures extant, either past, present or future.

What all I am suffering from his dirty hands during recent times no pen can write, no tongue can cry, for it is ineffable, i.e. sponging and scrounging like a parasitical leech, limpet, and tape-worm, upon the munificent bounty and lavishments of self and my dear wife ad lib, and then just turns round like an asp or serpent in your bosom and stings you atrociously in your tenderest anatomy. Only last week he committed utter "Black Male" to me say nothing of other nuisances and indeed my cup has been filled with bitter to the very dregs for months ago.

So I was sadly chatting all this to my old friend Doctor Hatu Ram, and pointing out what a divine mercy would be if Han's soul (if he has one) may be kindly transferred forthwith into some other metempsychosis (or as our Russian friends say "liquidated") to the delectation of man and the glory of God. Every night I am praying to our divine Permatma to take early action vide above, but so far no satisfaction.

Whereat Doctor Sahib to my surprise, became rather excited bending forward and tapping my knee with great gusto. "Now listen to me" he said "don't you have anything to do with mineral or metallical poisons e.g. Cyanide of Potassium, Arsenic, Yellow Phosphorus, or Corrosive Sublimate. If you do, the police will surely catch you. You must restrict yourself to vegetable drugs, tincture of aconite is good, or, if

you prefer it, our Indian Dhatura, being an extract of the Stramonium plant and indetectible nearly."

I said "Good Heavens man, do you take me for a human murderer, why the destruction of life even petty gnats, bugs, lepidopteras, etc., is strictly forbidden in our Sacred Books, as well you know. I should never dream of such inhumane depravity. I was merely propounding a theoretical hypothesis."

But even this resounding rebuke did not abash one whit or tittle the Doctor Sahib, who replied that making urgent prayers and imprecations to our divine Permatma to delete Han from this universe was just the same as suborning hired assassins for the same purpose. This, in my opinion, is Flat Blasphemy.

Well anyhow, we got talking over this Han business, and in the end I conceived a ripping notion, viz., that (Murder being absolutely unthinkable) the best next thing was to have him Kid-Knapped by Brigands, Robbers, Dacoits, etc., and hope for the best.

But Doctor Sahib, wouldn't agree, saying that "How will Kid-Knapping help you indeed? The Robbers will demand Ransom and your opulent wife will quickly stump it up for her brother, and then you shall be worse than before, with Han back again and having disbursed all his cost of ransom for nothing."

There was something in this certainly, but I am no man to be flabbergasted by a petty thing like that. So my plan was to pack off Pipi to Pondicherry City where resides her maternal aunt Mrs. Pijinsky, always writing Pipi to "Please pay me your visit dearie, and make a long stay," etc.

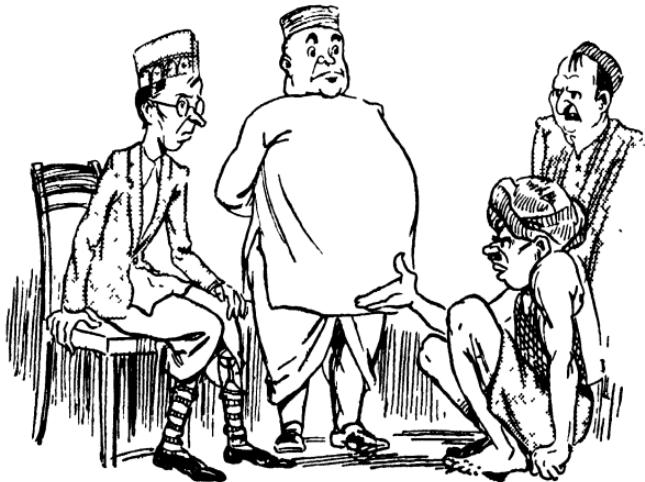
With Pipi away, all may be well doubtless, and you never can tell what happy events may transpire in the interim. Anyway, even if Han returned from captivity, he would be so funky coward against further abductions, perhaps he would take his hook

off to some other clime, and the farther the better say I, and if he asks my recommendation I have decided to warmly advise "Antarctic Circle," or perhaps "Tropic of Capricorn."

Doctor Sahib hum-ed and hah-ed a lot about my conception, nothing is ever good thing in his eyes, he is a sheer Pessimist and Fee-Faw-Fum. But in the end he agreed he would willingly diagnose Pipi as suffering from symptoms of Acute Physostygmatitis (a very rare and mortal disease) and urgently requiring a change-of-airs preferably to Madras District or perhaps Pondicherry. He also intimated that he is acquainted to a very decent Robber Chief called Barkatullah whom he had secretly treated for "Bullet-in-the-Spleen", just the very exact chap for confidential purposes, such as we had to do.

While he was telling to me all about this Mr. Barkatullah, I suddenly detected a shadow against the window pane as of somebody listening, and springing outside incontinently, I saw our family scourge (Han) making off swiftly towards cook-house.

Clearly he has been playing the Peeping Tom, so as to Eves-Drop Doctor Sahib and me, so what a



*Held a Committee Meeting.*

lucky thing my senses (ocular, auricular, olfactory, etc.) were At-the-Alert. Also Hatu Ram has no such sharp acumen, perspicaciousness, etc., which is doubtless due to Obesity and Hypertrophy of the Abdomen, for indeed he is an awfully fat fellow and his reactions are very sluggish.

Re Pipi, we had no trouble at all. Next morning Doctor Sahib (who is a 1st class actor I will say) made such an outcry re her dilated pupils of eyes, furred tongue, and most disquieting symptoms at back of her head clearly indicating Physostygmatitis, that she uttered one piercing cry and was off to Pondicherry by the next train *sine die*.

That same afternoon, self, Doctor Hatu Ram, the Robber Chief Barkatullah, and the assistant Robber (named Makru) held a committee-meeting (proceedings in camera of course) to make all the bandobast, viz.

(a) Both robbers agreed to abduct Han any day you like, and pleased to oblige, but current exes must be settled in advance, cheques not acceptable, nor currency notes of large denomination, final settlement to be made as soon as Han would be safely in the Robber's Lair. This was only fair and was passed nem. con.

(b) On the night of Abduction everybody in house except Han must be absent. That was easy, for the bihishti wanted to go to the Bara Mela (Cattle Fair) and the chaukidar's grandmother was due to be buried, so it all fitted in very well.

As for Ahoo the household Drudge or Slut, she was unwakable as I know very well, once she has begun to sleep and slumber which in my opinion is due to pure sloth. Why, once an Earth-quake shed upon her supine body one ponderous stick from the roof along with about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  maunds of bricks and *chitai*, but she just went on snoring away till the morning after,

so a mere irruption of dacoits would be quite imperceptible to her.

(c) As for Han himself, he is a lavish guzzler of beers, wines and spirits of alcohol, all of which are known to be of highly soporific tendencies if imbibed in adequate potations. So I purchased one firkin of strong porter, Alias Stout, and 3 bot. of Rum-wine in order as to induce sleepiness upon him on due date.

(d) Quite adjacent to my "Home" was one Police Thana, and it was settled to indite memo from village called Ramnagar about 12 miles distant so as to entice away these Policemen on a hoax, i.e., "false herring," such letter would be delivered on the evening of Abduction, by Makru the Asst. Abductor. This letter was penned out by me forthwith in a fancy hand-writing (signed Prem Singh) and stating that Communal Riots were raging about, including arson and other terrible nuisances being rife, and human people dying fatally off right and left, and kindly send reinforcements urgently.

(e) I myself in order to make my alibi was to take my evening foods with Doctor Hatu Ram, returning after the abduction. So you can see how all my bandobast was absolutely pukka.

On the day of Abduction, as arranged I hied off to Doctor Sahib's house and could hear Han already singing aloudy, also committing hiccoughs, sure signs of alcoholic intemperance, so my heart was blythe as cricket or indeed lark, feeling that presently we shall all be spared from this awful Incubus, say rather Succubus and Old-Man-of-The-Sea.

After a jolly repast with Doctor Sahib, I wended to "Home" at approx. 11 post meridiem as arranged, and so as to vindicate my absolute innocence was carrolling away some rollicky snatches in a highly melodious manner, when suddenly in deep dark two men leaped from out a bush near my "Study"

window, and one scrubbed a *jharan* or duster impregnated with a disgusting smell (chloroform doubtless) against my nose and the other threw one rezai-quilt over my head and screwed it round my neck owing to which I became quite insenseless in half a jifey.

After that I can only remember some recollections of riding for miles and leagues upon some beast of burden (such as ass) with my feet tied under said ass's abdomen, after which I woke up in a subterranean cave or rather cavern, surrounded by a terrible bevy of utmost villains, Thugs, Bullys, and Rough-Blokes all shod with guns, swords, spears and God-knows-what-all etc., etc.

In Khushdilpur Municipal Limits Mr. Barkatullah was certainly a very nice polite chap, but here he was quite different *Diabolical Tiger*. Ditto Ditto for Makru who exhibited to me (a) one registered envelope along with pen, paper and ink-horn (b) one basin (c) one bag of powdered salt (d) one razor.

Then tweaking my left ear in a very pregnant fashion cried out "Now Bhai, write to your fat Doctor friend and tell him to send you one thousand rupees by bearer without fail. No cheques accepted nor currency notes of large denominations. Or would you prefer me to write this letter enclosing your ear, so as to show that this correspondence should please be treated as 'urgent'?"

At his frightful verbiage all my past life came welling up before me in waves of anguish, and o'er my sorry pate I could feel the Finger of Damocles, not to mention the flappings of the wings of the King of Terrors (alias Angel of Death).

So seizing the penholder *ek dum* I was inditing missive to Doctor Sahib as per instructions recd. begging him to take immediate action to send cash instanter or I was as good as dead.

Also I was compelled to append post scriptum that my treatments, diets, etc., were absolutely spanking and Barkatullah was a princely host. All lies I need hardly say, but what could I do else poor fellow indeed. Even now, thoughts of my frightful visitation to Robber's Lair and near squeak vide paras. above cause fountains of "tears from some divine despair" to gush up in my heart and bring on "fits" and "stammers" so kindly excuse no further references to this abominable subject, also please note no postal correspondence will be attended to in such connections on any account.

I was nearly forgetting to say next day but one Doctor Sahib sent cash and I am now a free-man but utterly beggared. And my worst pang of all is I can't even report this kidknappery to the Police Department for fear they would inaugurate troublesome investigations re. the writing of that chit from Ramnagar signed by Prem Singh. So I am obliged to say to the Inspector Sahib that "No no, my dear Sir. I was never kid-knapped. It is just silly bazaar rumour and quite baseless. So please inform all concerned and oblige."

It is now also quite clear that Han knew all about his kid-knapping from beginning, having over-listened secret converse twixt Doctor Sahib, and Self vide above. On which, like a treacherous hound, he was conspiring with Barkatullah that "What is the good to kid-knap me? Nobody loves me nor will pay my ransom. You should in lieu kid-knap my dear brother-in-law the Babu Ji. He is rich as Cressis" (What a lie) "and also regular Cowardy Custard" (a worse lie) "so will stump up without ado, to any extent."

Oh, what a tangled web we weave when one we begin to deceive. I have utterly resolved myself, starting from Jan. 1st prox: never to emit one single falsehood again in all my born days unless absolutely

necessary. Owing to above acute pecunious embarrassments I am relying to receive enhanced payment rates for current journalistics, so I hope Editor Sahib, will take hint and oblige, otherwise very likely I shall die through sheer starvation of foods which will be a very sad pity for all concerned.

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# HARMODIO GREASE COY., LTD.

According to European Astrologerists, Friday, 13th of mensem is awfully disasterous day for transaction of business, owing to malefic conjunction of astral bodies (authority Mr. Cocky, Lemon). I never heard this before, with us Hindus Friday is not at all an obscene day, nor 13th either, but highly auspicious on the opposite hand.

Anyhow on a certain Friday, 13th of mensem, I was sitting in my "study" benignly chatting along with my good friend Dr. Hatu Ram; and Aho the Household Drudge (or Slut) came in to say a deputation of Gentlefolks wish to interview Your Honour, on which she donated to me large visitation card imprinted:

*Mr. Harmodio Mdivani,  
Kakhetia  
Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia*

and in pencil underneath PRESIDENT, HARMODIO GREASE COY., LTD. I said to Hatu Ram "Some importunate imposters I fully expect," but feeling indulgently inclined to all and sundry I added "Very well, let them insert themselves, but tell them, Be Quick, for Time is Money."

On which two smart and affable Semi-European gentlemen entered apartment attired in highly fashionable "frock" coats, one of them being tall and thin, *viz.*, Mr. Harmodio *vide* above, and the other short and fat (name dubious, but believed to be approximately TSCHUSCHTZ) his junior partner.

Their story was very extra-ordinary. Mr. Harmodio, speaking very decent English language, said Excuse me, Sir, but do you know anything of the History of Supply of Ghi, *alias* vernacular clarified butter, to the Governmental Military Forces of this State of Khushdilpur ? I said No.

He then began to tell to me what a crying shame that for twelve long years ago this Ghi contract is being held by Mr. Makhan Singh, Merchant, Khushdilpur City. And Why ? Because his paternal uncle is Colonel Hoshiar Singh, Chief of the Staff. Not only is contract rate utterly extravagant, but ghi is rotten too, but these poor military men can't complain owing to Colonel Hoshiar Singh.

Did you ever hear such a glaring piece of Iniquitous Nepotism and indeed Simony and worse, why such foul play makes every honest man's face to blush for shame, and burning tears boiling down his cheeks, dosen't it ? I said Yes certainly I quite agree, but why do you approach me in such connections ?

On which, applying dexter thumb to the lateral side of his nose, he made a very pregnant gesture towards me and Doctor Sahib, and drew from out of " Gladston " Bag two small sample tins, saying kindly oblige to taste this Ghi, and excuse troubling, for I have a highest opinion, Sir, re your sharpness in such matters.

Although rather mystified, all the same I replied that certainly, I do not yield the palm nor play second fiddle to any man re esoteric knowledge of Ghi garnered through many years Military Service in Indian A. S. C. both peace-time and F. S. (Mespot); by all means my dear Sir, I will adjudicate in this matter of ghi-tasting as you ask, on which I scooped a good finger-full from the tin and, after sniffing judiciously, rolled it around my tongue, palate, larynx, uvula, etc., sucking it thoroughly. Doctor Sahib doing ditto ditto, and there

was a deep silence except for clucking of tongues *vide* above.

It was prime quality ghi, that I shall swear to my dying day, sweet yet tasty and full bodied and with a strong dairy-like flavour (as it should be) and so I informed to Mr. Harmodio accordingly, adding that in my considered opinion it was last year's boiling worth ten annas per lb. retail and surely hailed from the Tarn Taran Dist. of Amritsar. Doctor Sahib said just the same, except he thought it was more likely from Lyallpur or Montgomery Dist. Anyhow both visitors seemed to be very pleased at our diagnostics and grasped our hands with warm affection.

So then Mr. Harmodio related a lot more datas, *viz.*, by some marvellous new "Triumph-of-Science" he could manufacture genuine ghi (pure cow-milk ghi kindly note and not vegetable oil rubbishes) for 2 annas per lb. wholesale! If he sold at 5 annas per lb. there would be a handsome prophet for everyone, and of this ghi he possessed ample stocks in well-appointed go-down in this very City of Khushdilpur, all ready for early mastication, deglutition, etc., also his purpose was to tender for new State Ghi Contract commencing after two months. But being a foreigner to these regions, so perhaps nobody would heed him or his tender, he was coming to me for the sake of my famous good-name, being a renowned resident of impeachable integrity, so that I should tender in my name and become Senior Partner, for which I should receive Rs. 300 per mensem pending duration of contract.

A princely offer surely and nobody but a born Tom-Fool would reject it. So in the end Doctor Sahib and self went to see this Go-down and it was exactly as Mr. Harmodio alleged, hundreds of tins of ghi 36 lbs. each, all duly sealed and smelling nice and sweet as nuts.

Next day having pursued all relevant enquiries from State Authorities, I was applying for tender form (duly received) so I tendered for State Ghi Contract at As. 5 per lb. (as instructed thereto by Mr. Harmodio). Since current rate was exceeding 11 annas we were cock-sure to get the contract, especially because H. H. Nawab Sahib Bahadur has given a *sakht hukm* that owing to financial stringency, cheapest tender for all contracts must be accepted *ipso facto*. Surely enough, in two weeks received notification "Your tender is hereby accepted."

My Heaven, what a Good-fortune, I bemused to myself I should be millionaire in no time and was rubbing my hands in high jinks. Just then Lala Jagat Narain, Wazir-i-Wazarat and Prime Minister, Khushdilpur State, came to "call" and said "Well, well, I hear you have obtained the State Ghi Contract. I wish you all Good-luck my dear chap and congratulations, but beware of Colonel Hoshiar Singh who is infuriated with cholera that his nephew Mr. Makhan Singh's tender has been rejected for the first time in twelve years. The Colonel Sahib has sworn to disembowel you, you and all your family. Sorry to bring bad news. Tata, my dear fellow, I must go to a Cabinet Meeting." With that, still laughing heartily, he went his way.

This sinister intimation gave me a very nasty turn, as well you may guess, but Mr. Harmodio was just poo-hooing the whole thing, averring Threatened men live longest, etc., etc., so in the end allaid my gloomy forebodings to a great extent, and I did not fidget myself so much though many another man would have been an absolute Blue-Funk.

So then the day of contract dawned on which the first issues were to be made to Khushdilpur State Lancers (Horse Cavalry Department) and Messrs. Harmodio,

Tschuschtz, (?) and self went off to those barracks together with two indigenious weighmen.

Both regimental Quarter Master Sahib and also Quarter Master Dafadar had already received handsome honorarium, so all was smiles and smirks, full receipt granted, all O.K., and no complaints. So we all returned to our "Homes" in great glee and capers.

I was myself planning to make a jolly treat to all my family members, (Acquitical Picknick in small boats or wherries) so as to celebrate this happy occasion, when at 4-42 p.m. Mr. Harmodio came rushing along and informed to me that all personnel of State Lancers about 322 Officers, non coms, and men altogether, after eating their dinners, became quite mad, fell down in fits, or else running about committing indecent behaviours of all kinds !

I said *Mad*? What do you mean mad? He said he didn't know. His Ghi was purity itself, clearly this was some *shaitani* or as he called it "Dirty work afoot," with that he went off in a tearing hurry saying he would see me later on. Good God, this terrible event took all my breath away I began to feel all of a twit, so biked off swiftly to intimate Dr. Hatu Ram and we both went out to prosecute enquiries, taking due precautions.

Almost immediately we saw a tremendous assembly of crowds all pursuing behind a totally nude human man (at least he was wearing pagri only) who was running along at about 20 M.P.H. on all four limbs, *i.e.*, quadrupedaciously like ape or baboon, emitting barks and squeals.

In such a fast race we could never keep it up, for Doctor Sahib in Athletics is a pure duffer, so being left behind I asked to one young Mahomedan butcher-boy that "What in the devil is all this?" He said with hearty guffaws "Wah! ! Wah! This is a grand tamasha! That naked fellow is Lance Naik

Habibullah Khan of the Horse Cavalry Regiment who has gone mad after eating a new sort of Ghi. And the other Jawans are just the same. Dafadar Ganda Singh has now locked himself up in the cook-house trying to catch and eat flies (raw) from the window-panes. Also another sowar is rushing through the city milking each and every cow in his path by force into a small degchi. Ya Khuda ! What a tamasha, nothing was seen like this since the Bara Mela and Circus of two years agone—.”

Naturally to self and Doctor Sahib this business was no joking matter far from it and Doctor Sahib was very gloomy, diagnosing such madness as either Dementia Praecox or else Acute Paratyphlo-Cerebritis both highly interesting and rare disorders. With that he began to prate about the difference between these two (what a medical chatterbox and jabbering sawbones he is to be sure) so I shut him up pretty sharp telling him to keep his rotten diagnostics to himself.

About two hours after received following wire “ All ranks Khushdilpur State Lancers gone mad following on imbibing new contractor’s ghi wire instructions earliest convenience addressed His Highness Nawab Sahib Bahadur repeated contractor for information.” (Signed) Chief of the Staff, Colonel Hoshiar Singh.

This was followed by second “ clear-the-line ” Telegram from H. H. himself to me, “ If fatality occurs among my subjects of Lancer Regiment hold you strictly responsible according to section 101 Penal Code ” (this section refers to murder).

While I was utterly prostrate with this frightful cataclysm, Doctor Hatu Ram came running to say Harmodio and Secretary just absconded to Bombay Presidency ! What will you do now ? What indeed shall I do ? The situation is perfectly shocking. Mind you, I know very well what this madness is.

It is no fault of the ghi you may be cocksure, for that is pure as driven snow. It is that Arch-Ghoul Colonel Hoshiar Singh *who has ordered his men to go mad forthwith, i.e., pure hoaxes and malingering shams*, so that contract may be cancelled and re-allotted to that devilish nephew of his Mr. Makhan Singh. That fact is abundantly clear from evidence all over the place.

Why one highly impudent bellows-boy has been trying to commit "Black-Male" against me alleging he also determines to go mad forthwith unless I donate to him Rs. 50, did you ever hear such saucy cheekiness?

But apart from this business of wholesale madness in State Forces and incurring H. H.'s heavy displeasure and my fair name tarnished to ruination, what am I to do with 1,484 maunds (over 50 tons) of ghi? Such quantity will suffice for my family needs and Dr. Hatu Ram's for about 100 years, so that suggestion is quite unpractical.

So will the great Indian Publics kindly note that this is absolutely prime quality delicious ghi and there is not a jot of truth in mendacious rumours that it is compounded of a stuff called "Sludge," *viz.*, waste oil for road dressings. It is pure cow-milk-ghi, no adulteration whatever.

You will all be in raptures over it's tasty edibility and richness in vitamins, and I will willingly sell this ghi at cutthroat rate, *viz.*, Rs. 10 per maund F.O.R. Khushdilpur City, including packing, freight, and octroi, too. Business papers please copy and oblige in such a terrible dilemma. Mr. Cocky Lemon says re Harmodio and Co. that clearly they have done a bunk and left you with the baby.

What this talk of babies is God Knows. If they have bequeathed any of their brats to my care (Illegitimate or otherwise) I shall certainly decline any sort of responsibility having four kids of my own loins, and legitimate too. But anyhow, babies or no, the future is definitely lugubrious to the highest degree.

# CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (SIC.)

In above connection kindly note that I myself am warmly addicted to the rearing of all sorts of "pets," "dumb friends," etc., including one aquarium of Gold Fish, one dog or rather hound called Snitch, and any amount of "feathered songsters," such as birds and fowls, etc., thirty-one altogether, say nothing of 18 embryonic eggs.

The latter are sumptuously accommodated under my direct and loving supervision in a pukka aviary, all except one special Big-Bird called Hannah from Madagascar Island, who is so unique rarity that Bird-Fanciers say she is the only extant progeny of the "Archæopteryx Horrificum" of the Jurassic Period, he has special cage or pen all for himself being prone to quarrelsome habits and pecking others.

Now on the 27th ult. self, Dr. Hatu Ram, my dear wife Pipi, and our four offsprings (two being infants in arms) were all to enjoy a nice rural excursion and in that connection we engaged on hire one bazar hackney carriage (vulgarly known as tonga) and were driving along all so gay, and blith past "The Links" (this is a large maidan set apart for the recreation of golf-game). Doctor Sahib was sitting himself in front together with tiffin "portmanteau" and the two lads or urchins, and sitting behind were self, Pipi, and the two tender infants sleeping in bassinette.

Suddenly from out those "Links" came one European lady running ever so fast and crying out vituperative ejaculations against us, and contemporaneously wagging one sort of golf-stick called either

“Kniblick” or “Jigger.” I am not sure, and before we could even guess What’s up, struck a shower of knocks and blows against me, the Doctor Sahib, and even my poor callow offsprings, right and left as it might be a dhobi or vernacular washerman thumping his clouts.

By Almighty Grace nobody was killed nor bones broken except Doctor Sahib, who got two nasty thwacks in his Epigastrium one of which, as I could see as plain as plain being aimed directly at my heart which I hardly succeeded to parry off by my umbrella.

In addition to this the damage to property (as we say in the Army, Fixed Dead Stock) was enormous, viz., hood of tonga sadly gashed, one splashing-board crackt in two, lamp smashed to smithers, and tiffin portmanteau broken into and contents rummaged all over the place, etc., etc.

It was quite clear that we were the victims of a homicidal Lady-Lunatick so with one accord the whole party with myself as the natural leader “in the van” sprang to the earth and taking their hooks off at the double-step (as we say in the Army) rushed in Office of Dilkhusha Hotel close at hand.

From that Office’s window we could still espy that tonga standing there with that lady still ejaculating, but all violence had passed away and soon after, as though satisfied with her handwork, she went off quietly back to her golf-game.

Soon after the tongawala came driving after us in Hotel and his story was as per follows. That lady was the Secretary for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (All-India) and her irascible choler was due to, firstly, we were too many and too ponderous for that tonga (rather an exaggeration surely, being only 3 adults plus 4 kids) and secondly that said horse drawing tonga had two sore spots on his left-hand

hind-thigh, so should rightly not be drawing carts, etc., but struck off duty for rests and refreshment.

So according to this theory, all way-farers journeying by horsed vehicles must previously inspect them to ascertain if any such equines, camels, elephants, etc., show signs of such scabs scars whitlows pimples corns bumps blains and blisters or any other integumentary abrasions, and if so they must report same to Police and engage another vehicle plying for public hire.

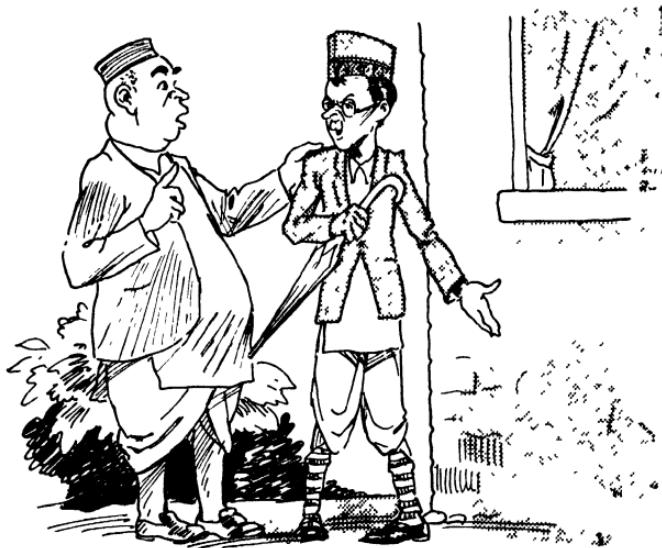
Why, such a categorical investigation will take ages and ages, Doctor Sahib says 40 minutes at least even for a sharp veterinary surgeon, so to a busy fellow like me it is quite a "Non-Possomous." But never mind, if you don't do so, you are in danger of losing life and limb from the officers of this Society (R.S.P.C.A.)

Far be it, Good Heavens, to promulgate racial animosities especially against these very merciful and creditable European ladies, who thus go about and devote all their teeth and nails to provide rays of sunshine into the *lives* of our dumb friends. I quite agree, certainly, I think it's a splendid notion and practice it myself assiduously, *vide* my para 1 above, but not to extent of *murder*, in case some small pimples or scratchings on a horse (or mare) may be inadvertently overlooked by the travelling publics.

So then I got chatting with Mr. Francisco Xavier, manager of Dilkusha Hotel, and he informed to me that the above European lady is a high-born dame of most illustrious lineage, *viz.*, Hon'ble Florence ffoulkes-Bodiam, and formerly a lady-in-waiting or Mistress-of-Robes (Mr. Xavier wasn't sure) to H. R. H. Princess Christian, and on Hob-Nobbing terms of familiarity with every crowned monarch in Europe and America. Now-a-days she was making a visit to this state of Khushdilpur so as to inspect the local branch of this R.S.P.C.A. and His Highness our kind Nawab Sahib was ordering

all and sundry to treat her with great distinction as befits her high rank.

Now I also am rather aristocratical by nature and hereditability, and like very much High Society, having once taken a dish of tea with one Dowager-Duchess (U. K.) and been on visiting terms with many Political Big-Pots such as Revenue Commissioners (two) Judges of the High Court (one) not to mention Highness such as Maharajahs, one of whom is G. C. I. E. and personal salute of 15 guns. So I was only quite willing to let Bygone be Bygone and say no more about this regrettable assault and battery. Also even from the religious view we are told we should love and cherish those that despitefully use you.



*You must preserve your valuable life for the weal of your  
nears-and-dears.*

So I was planning to Forgive-and-Forget and perhaps "pay a call" to Hon'ble Florence so as to hold a nice chitter-chat with her ladyship about mutual friends such as Dowager-Duchess of Bridlington, *vide* above. But Doctor Sahib would have none of it. He is a sad Radical sorry to say, and avers that if Hon'ble

Florence is, as is alleged, daughter of Belted Earl, then it makes it far worser, she should know better, and why did she select "Kniblick," *i.e.* strongest and most fatal of golf sticks if she only wanted to remonstrate with us for unintentionous cruelty as stated by you. Clearly her purpose was Murder without any mitigations both against all of us, including tender babes, and the tongawala too.

Also the more I was humouring him indulgently and winsomely, the more he was growing testy and frictious, shouting to me "As for you, you are just a Flunkified Toadie and certainly I shall not come with you to pay a call to this aristocratical lady, who did her level best to rupture me in a public conveyance." Clear logic is quite lost on the Doctor Sahib, he is a sad crotchet and curmudgeon, quite true he got some hard knocks but this bearing of malice and revenge towards a noble lady is surely against all the rules of Etiquette, say nothing of religious precepts.

Anyhow that is how we are talking together on the way to my new Mansion where Doctor Sahib was coming to visit me. My dear wife Pipi being gone to Madras City along with all the children, so self and Doctor Sahib were going to have a good party alone by ourselves. As we came near my "Drive" we saw motor-car (automobile) outside, bearing the insignia of Khushdilpur State. At the same time we heard a tremendous row-and-shindy from inside the house as of a communal riot of the worst sort.

Sukhoo the mali was there, peeping in with one eye against the key-hole, so, highly astonished, I enquired to him what's up. He said a Mem-Sahib along with the Inspector of Animals and also one Police Constable have reached in the house and raising ructions. I said "But why are they raising ructions? Explain yourself"

The mali said " As far as I understand, the Mem-Sahib was inspecting your Aviary of Birds-and-Fowls, and she vehemently complained that the cage of Hannah was much too small also highly insanitary, and insisted to release him therefrom without ado. But Ahoo the cookwench was withstanding her, alleging that Hannah loves his cage to be small and also dirty (this is absolutely true as I know very well).

All this time I was warmly insisting on Doctor Sahib that come what may and even at utter risk of my life I must enter into my Mansion and quell this terrible Hullabaloo, but Doctor Sahib (speaking as my Medical Adviser) wouldn't hear of it, alleging that " NO, NO. Clearly Hon'ble Florence is suffering one of her homicidal fits, and that you are a married man say nothing of four-fold pater-familias. You must preserve your invaluable life for the weal of your nears-and-dears." This was quite true, so in the end Doctor Sahib and self went creeping into a little Bushery or Bosky Dell, where we were quite safe and sound from harm, and at the same time be ready to take necessary steps when the time may seem ripe.

What a divine mercy we did go there, because about 3 seconds afterwards a large Japanese pot of China hurled through the " Boudoir " window (where most of the rumpus was transpiring) and crumpled into 1,000 pieces just where we were standing formerly. From our Coin-of Vantage we could not see very well, but it seemed that the fighting was between Hon'ble Florence, the local inspector of animals, and the police constable on the one side, and Ahoo the cookwench, Hannah the Bird, and Snitch the Dog on the other side. Sometimes it seemed that one side was victorious, then the other, it was a terribly anxious time.

Just when I was thinking " All is lost," the Hon'ble Florence came running-jumping outwards, down the steps, beating with her hands against Hannah the Bird

who was flying to and fro against her back of neck with strong picks and pecks, in which connection kindly note that Hannah has not got a mere beak or bill like usual dickeybirds, but a *Mandible* in lieu, *i.e.*, a much more offensive organ, with which he can easily crack coco-nuts and indeed does so daily, eating it all up shells and nut-kernels too.

Seeing their Commander thus vanquished, inspector sahib and police constable also fled away through the back door, pursued by Ahoo and the Dog Snitch, towards the Sadar Bazar. So in two minutes all was calm after the storm and Doctor Sahib and self, after taking due Military Precautions, impinged into the house.

Now I shall say nothing re damage and ruination to my furnitures, ironmongeries, haberdasheries, etc., but confine complaints to maimings and mutilations to my poor dumb pet animals, for apart from Hannah and Snitch (innumerable dilapidations and hard knocks) one bowl of goldfish has been burst in a wanton fashion and three handsome fishes still undiscoverable. Ditto ditto one pair of yellow-bellied meadow-pipits.

*Prima facie*, say nothing of *flagrante delicto*, this is a very serious misdemeanour against All-India Secretary of the R. S. P. C. A. as any just critic will agree. But as a magnanimous Hindu gentleman, one must remember that she is a feminine lady, of noble antecedents and blameless character up to now (so far as I know) so must not be too drastical against her.

I will merely call upon Honb'le Florence ffoulkes-Bodiam in this Open Letter to kindly elucidate her behaviour at early convenience preferably through columns of Public Press, including information re 3 fishes and 2 Y. B. M. pipits not available, *vide* above. I do not say definitely she has purloined or filched them, but it is all very highly suspicious I must say, and Doctor Hatu Ram thinks so too and even more so.

## PHYSICAL JERKS FOR GIRLS

What a funny puzzle Life is to be sure so full of weals-and-woes and ups-and-downs. Re ups, I certainly had one or two during these recent times. For one thing, Doctor Hatu Ram has discovered a Splendid New Medical Nostrum (or rather SPECIFIC) and has appointed me Business Manager with  $\frac{1}{2}$  share prophets.

This invention is *absolutely Epoch-Making* for there is no exaggeration that our Amritdhara (*i.e.* Fountain of Ambrosia) will cure each and every mortal thing such as Cholera Morbus, Plague whether Bubonic or Phneumatic, Ringworm, Flatulence, Serpent's Bite, Croup, Colliewobbles, Impotence, Elephantiasis, Fits, Prickly Heat, Dhobi's Itch, and any sudden onset of dreadful disease etc., etc., etc.

Believe me, it is a Heavenly Boon to High-and-Low and will also react against Deleterious Foreign Sediments. On sale at all 1st class Stockists, but if not, just write to me please directly and enclose Rs. 7-8 booking-fee. For there is such a rush just nowadays that we must despatch orders in strict rotation and no exceptions permitted even for Viceroys, Maharajahs, Millionaires, Members of the Legislative Assembly etc., etc.

Another good news you will be delighted to learn I have been nominated by our Gracious Ruler H. H. Nawab Sahib Bahadur of Khushdilpur State so as to be Deputy Assistant Director of Scholastical Services, special Department Girls Schools. As already informed to you in these columns, this appointment was firstly mooted because my dog Snitch bit the late Prime Minister Sir Ardesir Hormuzji deeply and caused his early evacuation.

But apart from that altogether, I need hardly say that I am already under the aegis of scores of golden opinions from my superiors, some if not all of them opine that one day I may certainly be Minister-for-Education All-India, though far be it to beat my own trumpet vain-gloriously, all the same I think it is a highly suitable appointment and time enough too that my capacious merits have recd. due recognition.

Salary is not so much, sorry to say, Rs. 105 p.m. subject to increment of Rs. 10 per annum, but owing to these hard financial times this increment has just become excrement, Hard Luck and Bad Cess. Well anyhow I am inspecting of Girls Schools since three weeks ago, and working away like a brick or Trojan, and in this connection kindly note that a very scandalous affair has transpired and how it will end God Knows.

Yesterday at the hour of the matitinal morning I was cycling along so blythe and care-free by way of Kucha Wah Watan Street when I espied on up-story verandah of the Shri Maharani High School a young girl's class of Physical Culture viz., Gymkhana, Callisthenics, etc. Ahah! I said, I must certainly look into this for I am awfully keen towards every sort of Athletics and Bodily Agilities as is well-known to all-and-sundry.

So having sent upstairs my visitation-card I was recd. with all proper decorum by Mistress Tara Devi, a smart young virgin, instructress of Mathematic, Sanskrit, and Physical Jerks as they are vulgarly denominated. As we literati know full well, the right name is *Callisthenics*. What a sweet and pretty spectacle met my delighted gaze, about sixteen girlish ladies, attired all so elegant and gracious, such as blue jerseys of wool-stuff bearing school monogramme thereon, and frilly sort of petticoats, settling off their youthful charms in a lovely vista.

I was quite ravished by this winsome and delightful Exhibition needless to say, for which great credit devolves on Mistress Tara Devi vide above. Firstly they did hopping and skiping on each foot alternatively, then springing freely into the Empyrean (almost) just like deers or young fawns, then Arms-circling, trunk-twisting, and loins-arching. Then toe-pointing and finger-snapping. After a short interval devoted to rest and innocent prattles, Miss Tara Devi struck a few melodious cords upon the pianoforte, whereupon all began to rush about in what is called "Free Movements" *i.e.* individual Anticks, Pranks, and Skylarks.

This exercise was so enticing that I began to conceive an overpowering whim to join in myself also, and exhibit my own agility in company with these sweet young gymnasts. After all, why not indeed? Could anything be innocenter than this? So I swiftly doffed off my Hindu hat, coat-and-vest, also collar, cravat and pump-shoes, so as to be brisk and nimble.



*I was the life and soul of the party.*

I was thinking to remove also my shirt (leaving I need hardly say a very decent singlet beneath) but

Miss Tara Devi said No, that would be an impropriety. So, like the invariable Gentleman I am, I refrained. After that I began to romp and lark about in company with them all, each and every one of those girlish pupils was so highly delighted, for I was the life-and-soul of the party as I always am, indeed.

After about ten minutes duration of these High-Jinks I was feeling quite perspired and exhaustible, so desisted momentarily, so as to breathe some more airs into my depleted lungs, livers, etc., and while my gaze was idly directed over the verandah wall into the precincts of Kucha Wah Watan Street, I perceived a sight that immediately made me inhale my pants with even more violent spasms.

A large lady attired in purple costumery with thick boots and an umbrella was swiftly approaching to the Entrance of the High School. My Gracious Goodness in Heaven, for I recognised my dear wife Pipi !

With me to-think is to-act. Straightway I hied to Mistress Tara Devi and informing her (as clearly as my pants would permit) that I am become queer and swooning possibly due to apoplectic seizure, so kindly introduce me to your private apartment or closet for the sake of recuperation of said sickly distemper.

Of course she was rather surprised at this, but nevertheless did so as requested to a nice dormitory just handy and opposite, I only just had enough time to close that door before the lady in the purple costume came up the stairs into the Gymkhana.

For two three minutes I could hear that new visitor's voice resounding and booming, and it seemed to me not a bit like Pipi's voice at all. So peering and peeping through crack of door I saw in half a tick that this isn't Pipi in the least, but quite another lady !

What a crass tom-fool I was to make such a silly blunder. This stranger lady was Anglo-Indian, and

much stouter-bodied than Pipi. Also slightly bearded and troubled with warts and whens. In demeanour she was clearly a very magisterial character and appeared to be rating and prating at those poor girls and their instructress like a furious shrew or hoity-toity.

So once again I began to glance through the cranny (taking due precautions of course) and the spectacle that I saw caused the heavy drops of perspiration looming on my brow and other anatomical portions turn into very ice and sleet.

For that magisterial lady was holding and shaking furiously in one hand my little hat and cravat, and in the other silver-monogrammed walk-stick of Malacker-Cane, real Sterling Manufacture, and recently donated to me by kind friends to be wielded on and on till my senescence. It was clear she was crying "And who do these belong to, pray?"

It soon also became proved by the conversation that that lady was the President-of-the-All-India-Council-of-Girls-Schools, and her name as I have since apprehended, is Mrs. Angelina Panto. I was just pondering in my heart what now I ought to do, when suddenly the door of my closet swooped open bang right against my left ear and funny bone (Ulnar Nerve) and that awful Mrs. Panto was upon me.

Never has been heard such a Babell and Cat's Concert, for apart from Mrs. Panto's vehement vituperations, nearly all the young ladies of the Callisthenic class were committing fits and hystericks in every direction. This in Society is technically known as a "Scene."

All this time Mrs. Panto was bandying verbiage against me that "And you Sir, what do you do, all undressed to semi-nudity in the sleeping dormitory of the Physical Culture Mistress?" Naturally I started to point out as well as I could how I was awfully keen with my Life-Long Zeal in athletical pastimes, and so as

to disincumberate myself from impedimentas and paraphernalias, was divesting just a few only of my superfluous cloths. But only paltry trifles such as hat and stick, also I was the new Inspector of Girls Schools and hence surely above suspicion like Caesar's wife, Good Heavens Alive.

But do you think such a pure and laudable explanation vide above was the least credibility to such a thorough-paced scold as was this Mrs. Panto? And can you imagine what sort of accusation she was calumniating against me all-so innocent?

Why, no less than charge of unchastity, and indeed concubinage in conjunction with Mistress Tara Devi (now swooned on the floor sorry to say). Never in the History of the World I should think was such a Scandalum Magnatum (to use rather a high-class expression) and say nothing about such a foul and vile smerch on a blameless Escutcheon such as I was. The whole thing is absolutely intolerable, as any fair critic will concur.

Am I, may I ask, a sort of Fast-Dog and Loose-Fish to seek out illegitimate Honey Moons and acts of intimacy with a comparative stranger? Have I done any smallest action prejudicious to the Public Convenience? Is not my whole life a standing refutation to all these scurvie innuendos? The answer to all the above querries is, I need hardly say, in the emphatical negative. No, No, No, No.

But Mrs. Panto was such a bumptious Jack-in-Office (say rather Jill-in-Office), and so inflated with priggish coxcombery that she treated me just like Dirts, coolly ignoring that I am her honourable colleague in the Scholastical Profession, and not just a small fry and rotten riff-raff, shouting "Be off, low fellow and Rascall, Hook it, and remove your vile body away from these pure precincts and purlieus ek dum and instanter, and be very sure that I shall report your

behaviours to the Minister for Education and to His Highness himself."

So then I went off to acquaint this terrible calamity to Doctor Hatu Ram. What an old croker he is to be sure, always mumping and moping. He says the Police are sure to challan me on a charge of making immodest overtures to a Government female servant in the execution of her office.

So I have decided to take some propitiatory steps in advance in conjunction with my dear wife. Only last week I was rather grumbling her reckless extravaganzas in purchase of delicate kickshaws such as Paraunthas and Puris. Also Mirchi, Masala, etc.

So to-day I have intimated to my sweet life-companion that this veto is cancelled. "Buy as much of them as you hanker, my own darling, never trouble and don't care for expense." Also I have donated her a new kundi for her kitchen which she is cajoling from me in vain since many weeks. So (for the moment) Pipi is full of good spirits and frolicsome as a grig or cricket.

I have also consulted my old friend Mr. Cocky Lemon, proprietor of the Nimbu Livery Stables and Hackney Carriage Emporium, Khushdilpur City, and he is much more hopeful. He says "Lorlummy and Strewh Albert" (this is soldiers' oaths) "Why shouldn't you take your shoes and hat off and skip and skedaddle about with these young wenches? What's the harm in that? Gorblimey, Why some of these precious fellow-countrymen of yours, Yogis and Swamis and Sannyasis and such-like, don't wear anything but a smear of wood-ashes and a gourd on a string. If your Mrs. Panto gnashes her teeth when she sees you without a hat on, what does she say when she sees them, Eh?"

There is a deal of truth in this, and I was much thankful to Mr. Cocky Lemon on account of his comfortable words and shook hands with cordial gusto.

I shall certainly mention about these yogis and sannyasis as Mr. Lemon suggests. So let us look on the bright side. Why should we fearfully and wistfully look into the darkness of the Future Time? Why indeed? Mr. Cocky Lemon quite agrees, though I don't think he understands our grand Hindu system of philosophy very well, all the same.

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## ESSAY RE. HORSE (EQUUS CABALLUS)

As is doubtless known to most horsy gentlemen and ladies, Horse, speaking zoologically, is Solidungulate Perissodactyl Mammal of the Equidae Species. Secondly he belongs to the Vertebrates having four legs (quadruped) and bushy long-tail. A small petty horse is called "Pony" and large horse "Stallion". The young of horse is called "Foal" and female horses are dubbed "Mares", or if you like to be rather knowing fellow "Fillies". Ethnologically, horses are related with Asses, and if sexual promiscuity may occur, the fruit of such intimacy is Mule.

The latter brute is quite different thing all together and should not be confounded on any account, for Horse is good and nice animal, also Ass, but Ass-Horse or Horse-Ass is one of the most loathsome vermins extant, I have no hesitation. The Great All Mighty (as we Hindus say our Divine Shiv Ram, etc.) has clearly vetoed such unnatural unions, having ordained that all children resultant therefrom shall be impotent (propagatively). It will thus be seen that to encourage such reprehensible connections is Flat Impiety say rather Sheer Blasphemy and I strongly advocate, as I have always done so, that the rearing of mules must be forbidden by law as a felonious misdemeanour.

What all I have suffered by these nasty brutes no pen can write, no tongue can cry ever since (patriotically) I volunteered for Field Service (Overseas) in the Indian Commissariat Dept. Just to show you what a bane and a bugaboo they are to all decent and humane men, I was once officially concerned with a large flock

of mules in F. S. Mesopotamia, in a railway wagon, out of which I was absolutely kicked through the air by two mules, male and female, contemporaneously, right into the 2nd class Hindu Ladies Waiting-Room, where I was lying a supine prostrate during 3 hours 48 minutes (life despaired of) and what was I doing you may well enquire to merit such a malignant brute force, why I was actually fondling and cuddling said pseudo-enquires, tapping them on rumps and similar portions, also chirruping, so as to inspire affectionate feelings, so it shows you that you might as well nourish Loving Kindness and Bowels of Compassion to a venomous asp or ravening Bengal tiger, doesn't it ?

So let us say no more on a disagreeable topic, the horse on the opposite hand is universally acclaimed "Friend of Man", "Noble Creature", etc. though sometimes I must confess, even he will not always do so.

Domestical horses may be classified as (a) Pack and (b) Draught, according whether (a) one *rides* on top of them or (b) *drives* them attached to a wheeled vehicle. In (a) an ingenious contrivance called "Saddle" or "Harness" is affixed to the small of the back by an item called "Surcingle" on which sits the rider, and also there are other accessories e.g. bridle, martingale, stirrup, crupper, etc. These mechanical contrivancies sorry to say are by common custom both oriental and occidental fashioned from *tanned leather*, which is a terrible anathema to Orthodox Hindus, to whom close association with flayed hides of dead brutes is one of the vilest religious impurities, and if it gets wet it is even worse as is well known, and the sin can hardly be absolved with the most stringent purificatory rites.

I remember once chitter-chatting re this to H. H. Maharaja of Jidhpur a rather illustrious horseman at a gala of Polo-Game in which all the contestants (Hindus kindly note) including Maharaja himself were

openly riding saddles of flayed hides of defunct creatures including swines and bovines, not caring one button about religious suspectabilities. So I was ventilating these censures to H. H. (speaking with perfect tact I need hardly say) such as "Come Come your Highness this is a very deplorable situation and you are incurring a very wrong example to your social inferiors" etc., etc., on which he burst into a pukka tantrum crying Hook it Rascall and other addendas I should blush to recapitulate. Comment is I think superfluous.

Anyhow my own conscience is perfectly clear. I eschew utterly for myself leather saddles, harness, etc., which are forbidden in our Sacred Books (Vedas, Upanishads, etc.) and in lieu have evolved my own patent invention including saddle-tree fashioned of the timber of the Bel Tree (a highly sacred shrub) and on this is affixed some blue velvet and gold braid of Benares manufacture, which is our Hindu Holy of Holies, and thirdly the "girths" are of pure cotton from which product kindly note is woven the sacred triple thread of the Brahmin. So my saddle is not only pure as Driven Snow (religiously) but also is a handsome caparison much admired by competent critics on innumEROUS occasions.

If horse is employed purely and simply for equitationary diversions they are called hack-horses or hacknys. This exercise is warmly advocated by the medical faculty for sluggish liver, lights, etc., and being a glorious pastime may be indulged by all sexes including feminine ladies and tender infants. In this case Horse is usually called "Palfrey" or "Jennet". Some ladies are preferring to ride a-straddle, but others sideways, i.e., both legs same side in lieu of each leg different sides in which case of course the "Saddle" must be adopted accordingly to have both stirrups on the same side, generally left side.



*I have often times insisted warmly to my dear wife Pipi  
just to essay this Horse Exercise.*

I have often times insisted warmly to my dear wife Pipi just to essay this Horse Exercise, please sweetie, but No, she always is refusing rather sulky sorry to say, but perhaps after all she is wise and prudential, since her tissue though very delicate is rather too adipose for athletics and psychologically she would be classified C 3, I should surmise. So if she would be tossed off it will be a serious pity doubtless. However my 2 young-boys are shaping very nice, but so far only on asses as is compatible with their tender years naturally. As for myself personally all this curriculum of horse-hacking is a passion, such as to trot, to amble, to canter, to gallop, all this is simply child's play to me. Often I intentiously loose all the reins, dashing along freely and quite intrepidly, thus depending purely on my legs with only a slight touch now and then to the saddle-bow, which is not a trick I would recommend to the tiro or greenhorn I need hardly say.

But to an ardent sportsman what a fine and jolly fun to frisk and scamper along o'er hill and dale (say nothing of hedges and ditches) straddled on some fleet

and fiery nag, plying whips and spurs so as to break the record on the wings of the wind. My old "Pall" Mr. Cocky Lemon who is part-proprietor of the Nimbu Livery Stables and Hackny Carriage Emporium Khushdilpur City and a very knowing chap re Equine Lore, is always averring that when I go a-riding it is a marvellous sight and worth coming miles to see. Kindly note in this connection that I am not just beating my own trumpet or bragging myself up vain-gloriously, such is never my habit, I need hardly say indeed, for Self-Praise is no recommendation I quite agree. But the above appreciation is not my opinion but Mr. C. Lemon's, so may be taken as a hard fact. As to this I take no credit, horse riding is a nack, some peoples have it and others' have not it, and will never get the nack try they ever so. Doctor Hatu Ram for instance, my acquaintance of many years' standing will never succeed to be a horse rider, being (like Pipi) a very fat fellow, and a funky coward to boot. Also if he did achieve to mount himself, he would certainly have a sad miscarriage at an early juncture. This is not to say that the worthy Doctor Sahib is not a good-fellow in certain aspects, and I cherish many kind regards for him, but in the matter of equestrianism he is, to speak the truth, an absolute foozle.

I mention these observations because the worthy Doctor Sahib has seen fit to take on himself to poo-poo this Essay right and left saying with incredible impudence that it is all Trash and Rot. What does a medical sawbones know re Equitation one may enquire shrewdly? And as for composition of floury English and stylish syntaxes why (as I have already pointed out to all-India) he has only indited one preciosity to the Public Press in all his born days by the title of "*Review Of The Milk Supply in Lahore* (or perhaps it was Amritsar). *During the Decade 1911-1920 with Special Reference to the Incidence and Endemicity of the Cholera Bacillus in Rural Areas.*"

As you may easily guess, this pretentious effusion was (quite rightly) ploughed by no less than four editors one after the other. So how the worthy doctor can have the saucy cheekiness to pass adverse strictures against a publicist of my reputation beggars description. Let me tell him the Whale does not fear the buzzes of the mosquito, buzz he never so sharply. He (Whale) can afford to trust to the Verdict of Posterity say nothing of the literary World-of-Letters who I dare to predict will have some pretty tart things to say to our egregious Doctor Sahib, I shouldn't be surprised. Next week my essay will be about the Racing Horse or "Racer" and Mr. Cocky Lemon says he has never read anything like it, so do not miss this on any account.

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## HORSE-RACING

You would be glad to hear I hope that I am just recently resolved to sojourn to U. K. at an early date if not sooner and I shall bring along one or two spanking "gees" with the view to become a Patron-Of-The-Turf. Perhaps some of your haughty readers may altogether sneer such an idea, such as to say, "Oho ! Pish ! What does an Indian Babu know about the glorious Sport-of-Kings ? What a presumptuous Tomfool must he be to be sure!" But I have a sanguine hope that when such carping critics (if any) would peruse this Essay *in toto* from 1st to last they will become rather bashful and very sorry for hasty strictures vide above.

Kindly note firstly that I am far from a muff or rabbit in equine accomplishments having been since many years ago warmly addicted to all sorts of "mounted" sports of horsemastership, quite true I have not (so far) perpetrated any actual horseracing to speak of, but what of that pray ? It is well-known that in racings there is only one qualification demanded, *viz*: Will your horse run more fastly than the other horses, if so he will win them, otherwise not so. No marks whatever allotted for style, turn-out, handsome harness, graceful carriage, etc., so the aim at issue is perfectly simple and plain such as any Tom or Dick can understand, *i.e.* swiftness of gait, that and nothing else.

Now in Occidental Countries, so I am creditably informed, selection of racing horses is depending on one thing only, who was his father, who was his mother, and his grandmother and such and such, in short *Hereditability*, purely and simply. I freely concur that such atavistic evolution may succeed to rear fine strong cattles whose bodily attributes are absolutely topping. But is *bodily* attributes all that should be considered ?

Not so, I venture to opine. Why, they have forgotten the vitalest factor of all—the MIND ! It is the mind or brain of animal that causes his legs to revolve, and no volition can take place without the impulse of mind. So I beg to state my humble opinion that these occidental theorists are committing a grave blunder in ignoring this important aspect. In this connection kindly consider this petty anecdote re self.

I am of athletical proclivities doubtless, but hardly a champion I would say, no prizes to speak of excepting Runner-Up in Tournament of Badminton, Rly. Workshops Jamalpur E. I. R. Christmas Holidays 1918. Father and mother both disinclined to bodily prowess or agilities, and in physique rather squits. Alright then, *pace* these occidental theorists, I shall never become Olimpic runner let us say.

One day, some years since, I was taking my recreation for fresh airs in the meads and pastures near Bognor I. of W. England, suddenly a stupendous bull (quite as large as a No. 2 category elephant) loomed into my ken and passionately snorting and cavorting, charged directly upon me. Now I am no funky coward as is warmly acknowledged by all-and-sundry, but I am a family man and must think of bairns and brats depending from me, so began to scud away at the top of my bent, and without drawing breath traversed  $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles (as crows fly) and finally leaped over one stone wall, height 8 feet, garnished with (broken) soda water bottles at the top. And the plough-boy who was attending that bull averred afterwards to me that my legs were twinkling so fastly that they were invisible to the naked eye (like wings of humming birds). Very well then, what logical inference may be deducted from above-cited phenomenon ? It is this. When we human creatures (and brutes too) are obscessed by some overweening emotion, we can perform gymnastics such as no Olimpic champion could ever encompass.

I was ventilating these hypotheses one recent day to my old friend Doctor Hatu Ram, who concurred me very cordially, adding that our Hindu holy mystics such as Yogis, Gosains, Paramahamsas, etc., so thin and frail as they may be, can achieve miracles of bodily convulsions far stronger than any lion-tamer or wrestler by profession. E. G. Doctor Sahib was once making his pilgrimage to our Hindu Holy-of-Holy, Benares City (Kasi Ji as we say) and became introduced to a famous sorcerer possessing occult powers over the brutes, and in Doctor Sahib's very presence had by merely whispering a very terrible and powerful Mantra or incantation into an ear of horse (just an ordinary bazar tonga-tat) on which that horse, evincing the most unbridled terror, galloped away and traversed the whole circumambience of Benares Municipal Limits, called Panch Kosi Circular Road, 36 miles in all, in  $21\frac{1}{4}$  minutes, returning to that very spot according to the hukm of the sorcerer. This, kindly note, is over 100 miles per hour rate, which must surely be World's Record, eh?

Needless to say this marvellous narration of Doctor Sahib struck me (as a racing man) quite aghast and agog, for it seemed to promise wealth beyond the Dream-Of-Avarice, and you may be cocksure that I cross-examined him pretty sharp, for Doctor Sahib has an indifferent record for veracity and before now I have detected him in some thundering fibs. But no, I could not shake his evidence by one whittle, and in Sacred Things like this he would hardly dare to lie. Besides he pledged his word to me on water of Mother Ganga and also Tail of Sacred Cow.

I mention these observations because another friend (European gentleman) Mr. Cocky Lemon tends to poo-poo the whole affair, such as How do you know that your precious sorcerer-friend didn't stick a hat-pin into that horse when he was whispering into his ear? Also other base innuendoes. The fact is Mr. C. Lemon

is thoroughly septic, sorry to say, against our grand system (say rather cosmogony) of Hindu Philosophy and hence is a hostile witness on whom no credence should be placed.

Anyhow I said to Doctor Sahib "Hie off now like a good-fellow to Benares City and search out this Hindu occult gentleman and inform to him that if he would accompany with me to Europe country and cause horses to run at this phenomenous speed I will gladly give him one lakh Rupees." (I note from Encyc. Brit. 14th Edn. that the prize for even one race (such as Derby) is £11,605, equals more than one lakh and a half! So after the 1st race it will be pure profit).

So after 3 days, Doctor Sahib returned along with Professor Yajnavalkya Mahamahopadyaya, Astrologer really, but speciality Exorcism and the calling up of Spirits of Animals. As Mr. C. Lemon observed, he was no beauty, but we were not concerned with personal beauty but quite another business as I pointed out pretty tartly. As for being dirty, certainly he is dirty, and he ought to be dirty, being a holy-man.

Another feature that Mr. C. Lemon saw fit to criticise adversely was the Professor Sahib's left eye which has suffered some sort of deformation or occlusion. But what of that? Very likely he has poked it out himself as a religious austerity. Anyhow I am abundantly satisfied that the Professor is a thoroughly competent Wizard and Necromancer, and has promised to teach me how to quell ferocious denizens such as tigers by the power of the human eye.

Professor Yajnavalkya Mahamahopadyaya says that it doesn't matter a button what grade of horses I may purchase, they will win just the same. If necessary, he can make them fly through the air like eagles, but I said No, this is not required, perhaps they might be disqualified if they didn't adhere to the ground so he

said very good he would note the fact. All the same, I shall certainly buy some 1st class "Blood-Stocks" so as to be on safe side.

I see vide Racing Papers that a fellow-countryman, H. H. Aga Khan has also been winning Horse Races in large numbers. May I offer him my best respects and warm encomiums for worthily enhancing our prestige in an alien land? But I must say I am disappointed to learn that His Highness does not ride himself but suborns professional grooms and stable-boys called "Jockies", which I think is contrary to the "Unwritten Law" and the best interests of sport. Anyway my Motto will be "Owners Up."

I have designed my racing colours, *viz.*, green (for hope) white (for purity of purpose) and Black (for death). That is to say I shall not shrink to stake my very life itself if so needs be. Certainly it is a very handsome suit (pure silk) and on the breast is to be a device or emblem either Pea Cock or Elephant, it is rather difficult to decide which is more symbolical of our dear Motherland. But I will let you know in good time, in case you wish to bet some wagers.



*I am awfully busy now reading up all I can re Horseflesh*

I must end now for I am awfully busy in reading up all I can find re Horseflesh, and I am compiling a glossary of Technical Terms which I think should find a ready sale in India for our young sprigs. I see that one must never say Left Leg, Right Leg, but Near Leg, Off Leg. This seems a funny rule. Also one should never mention a horse's "tail" but his "brush." "Tail" presumably is thought indelicate.

But the fact is nearly every anatomical portion of horse, according to my diagram, is apposite to what you would expect. For instance his shoulder is "Withers", his knees are "hocks", his ankles are "Pasterns", and his buttocks are "Stiffles." As for his height, breadth, etc., you must never mention it in yards or feet but in "hands"! I can see no useful purpose in this regulation. But all the same if you miscall any of these items even by a hair's breadth, then you will be drastically condemned by all Horsy Circles as a sheer dunce and lubber, so you have to mug them all up willy-nilly.

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## FLIRTING AND SPOONING

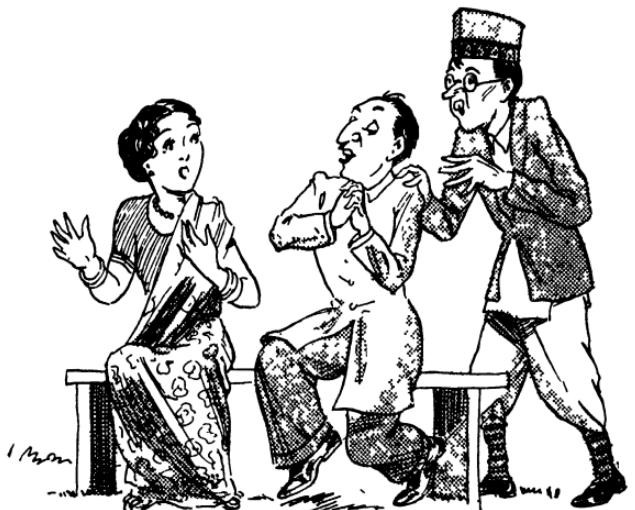
I must say I was highly disgusted against my “old pall” Mr. Cocky Lemon when I informed to him re inditing Essay of “Spooning” for your good readers, he replied shaking his head with a pregnant air, “No, no, Bitchy, my boy, you mustn’t do that. Mark my words you’ll get yourself into trouble. I’ve been a co-respondent myself, say nothing of sanitary corporal in the Army, so I ought to know what I’m talking about”.

What a low thought and shocking shame! As though (For sooth!) Spooning is to be compared with Adultery, fornication, etc., etc.! My Gracious Good Heavens All-Mighty, as though I should ever dream to sully my literary exutcheon with any theme smacking in the smallest title or jot of any unchastity or Sexual Incontinency I need hardly say indeed! No, no, Mr. C. Lemon, you have besmirched my fair fame with undeserved mud in a foul fashion, which I can never condone without a heavy meed of censure.

Flirting, or as it is commonly dubbed Spooning, is absolutely different thing all together, meaning to say *To play at Courtship*; *To practise Amatory Advances towards an opposite member of sex*. In short a pretty and innocent pass-time. It has been averred by foreign critics that we Indians are not so much indicted to Flirting in the Occidental manner. As a rule I am the first to rebut any carps or cavils levelled against my dear Motherland with teeth and nails, but perhaps in this innuendo there may be a subtraction of truth, undeniably you do not often times espy our Indian lasses and lads publicly engrossed in the Prim Rosy Paths of Dalliance, which in my opinion is a jolly sad pity,

because if such Flirts would be conducted with propriety and decorum it will be a sweet and poignant spectacle.

So I shall touch this subject from the view of the young callow swain of Indian birth and nationality who, flushed with the glow of adolescent love is cherishing a strong whim to initiate a spoonerism with some lovely, but quite ignorant of the pukka procedure. Alright then, for the sake of conveniency let us call the young chap Mr. X. and the young lady Miss Y.



*Should he instantly accost his subject of adoration with erotic verbiage?*

Let us then suppose (ex hypothesi) that the meeting of these two twin-souls transpires in some nice Botanical Gdns, let us say, and that Miss Y's Mamma or other female relative has retired temporarily about some private business, and the lovers are *Alone At Last*. What then should Mr. X. do? Should he instantly accost his subject of adoration with erotic verbiage and unfold his overweening passion? By no manner of means. Such black-guardly behaviours would rightly be stymatised as "fast" and hotly resented by the addressee, say nothing of her mamma who might be skulking

in the shrubberies. Besides it would alarm doubtless this tender shy-bird who has won his heart. No, no, Mr. X. you must confine your raptures to signs and tokens from afar, such as casting sheeps' eyes, leers, smirks, and loving ogles. All such gestures are quite in order. Also deep gulping sighs are to be recommended as though of some divine despair, but not carried to excess of course, in case Miss Y, may not surmise you are suffering from Asthmatic Seizure which actually transpired in bye-gone days to the author of these Essays.

But how then, you will enquire, is young Mr. X. if he is (vide above) precluded from human speech to notify his paramour of his undying attachment? This is a very pertinent querry, and the answer is that although direct oral sollicitation would be a heinous liberty, certainly he may present a written missive, such as Valentine, love-letter, billet-doux, etc. This course is recognised in all etiquette books, and in this connection kindly note without fail to carry always on your person one ftn. pen and some high-class stationery preferably pink or pale blue which should be nicely perfumed, and in one corner it may well have imprinted some tender sprigs or flowrets such as orange-blossom, symbol of marriage. This is only a suggestion of course.

So far so good, the question then naturally arises how this all important missive (on which very likely two sacred human lives depend) should be couched. Well firstly of course the style and diction must above all be lofty, sublime and erudite, yet not bombastical but winsome rather. Secondly in my considered opinion it must be in *Poetical Verses*. Poetry and Music are, as is well-known, Love's most powerful adjuncts. As regards music, including of course song, it is questionable whether such is advisable in the Botanical Gdns now at issue. For one thing very likely

Mr. X. has not brought a suitable musical instrument to play with. And of course there may be local Bye-laws forbidding Musicians, as to which enquiries should be prosecuted from the Park Keeper. But poetry in my humble opinion is indispensable.

To this you may demur that “Oho! But I am no dab and crack at these poetics. How then shall I achieve such lyrical roundelay etc?”. To this I reply, never mind, do not care. Just sit down and compose away. Besides if you are really caught in the toils of love, poetics will flow from you in spontaneous streams. In short, poetry is quite easy really and is highly esteemed by all decent wenchies. I myself once when crossed in love was inditing a grievous “Lament” in 147 stanzas in one hour and twenty minutes duration (Elegiacs) so I can tell you some good hints, wrinkles, and inklings.

For instance, Love, Turtle-Dove; woo, Bill-and-Coo; yearning, Burning; girlie, Curlie; Heart, Cupid’s Dart; all these rhyme nicely together, and I have not any slightest objection to you taking these tips, but perhaps better ask Editor in case he would get huffy re copyrights. In this way you can compose couplets and stanzas ad libitum and infinitum.

E. G. Supposing you wish to solicit your object of adorations’ presence to a dancing-ball, could anything be more winning than the following verbiage:— “Pray you come and tread a measure, On the sward, my pretty treasure”. Of course some English words are easy to rhyme and others awfully hard. “Pet” for instance is easy one, such as “Oh you are my pet, that I never shall forget”. Or else you can say “Oh you are my Honey, Dearer far than any Money”. “Troth” is a nice word and can be used with advantage such as “Take, Oh Take, my Plighted Troth; Hear me pledge my solemn Oath”. “Darling” is a nasty word to rhyme. I can only find “Snarling” which is difficult to fit in. “Cupid” is a nice word

too, but the only rhyme is "Stupid" which of course you should never say to her even if she be rather a dull. Of course these observations are not meant to be *exhaustive*, but merely *suggestive*. I cannot impart in 4 to 5 paras all the esoteric secrets of the Heights of Parnassus say nothing of Helicons' Harmonious Springs (sorry if I am talking above your heads with these highly classical hyperboles) for poetry is a Vast Domain, but all the same it will show you that it is easier than some people think it to be so.

Needless to say in such communications not one single word must be included in the text that may be low or coarse, which would be an unpardonable solacism. For instance take "Wedding" a word you clearly often will require to be using. I was seeking out a rhyme and Mr. C. Lemon advised "Bedding." Now I should stigmatise that as rather gross and impure, and told to him so in no measured terms. The fact is that he is lacking in modesty both of speech and deportment. I don't say he is definitely lewd and lascivious, but as for composition of a chaste and delicate ode to a young Miss why he hasn't a foggiest notion.

After Mr. X. has thus indited his first letter-of-love, vide antepenultimate para above he should deposit the missive in some conspicuous nook near his lovely, and preferably without passing a single word take his adieu with a deep bow. The utmost he should permit himself is to turn around once and placing his fingers to lips waft a light and dainty kiss, but no more than that, so as not to alarm the coy quarry.

Let us then turn to Miss Y. who having appropriated the sweet missive is perusing it with burning cheek and tremendous ebullitions seething in her bosom. What has been her behaviour all this time? She should regard these approaches from a comparative (or total) stranger with powts scowls and high

dungeons, such as to say "How dare you Sir to presume to pen these voluptuous verses to one of my prudish virginality? Oh Fie, Fie, and for shame to you Sir indeed for a sad scapegrace and loose-fish". Of course all this is a bogus hoax really, for interiorly she is secretly highly delighted and all of a twit, but she must pretend to be the exact opposite. This is known as *Coquetry* and is very important. Secondly, and this is even more important, she must refrain utterly from any written reply to Mr. X's letter. To do so would incur the grave odium of being categorised as a "light wanton". In short she must just do nil, and await further action in due course from the other party (Mr. X.).

I remember a very sad case in Bombay Municipal Limits which came under my own direct observation, *viz.* a young Parsee virgin of modernistic tendencies, thus solicited by love-letter and was writing by return post:—"Yours of even date recd—and thanks awfully. Certainly I will contract matrimony with you, my dear Sir, and delighted. Kindly fix appointment with Papa and Mamma for marriage settlement at early convenience and oblige. Best love and kisses from your adorable Pixie". That was the name she was calling herself after the European fashion. Very sorry to say that on receipt of this reply her young swain absconded right away to Hong Kong and never seen any more. (Believed to have committed suicide.) So it shows you how careful Miss Y. has to be.

The above closes Meeting No. 1, so let us end on a note of warm hope that nothing of Miss Pixie's sort may happen in this case and that the course of true-love for these two Young-Folks may come to an awfully happy end.

# GENTLEMAN'S ETIQUETTE

How many times my young Indian friends and admirers were egging me to indite some good Hints and Inklings re: Decency and Polite Behaviours at European sorts of Repasts, Picknicks, Dancing-Balls, Soirees, etc., (pronounced Swarrys) saying that, "Come along, Lal, that's a good chap, and impart us how to do in such connections, for you are now a Pink-of-Fashion and pukka La-di-da." I would hardly say that, but doubtless, I am on terms of intimate hobnobbery with some pretty highly-placed nibs, to deny that were mere mock-affectation, so certainly I shall have much pleasure to oblige accordingly, and very likely European gentlemen and ladies will derive valuable wrinkles at the same time too.

The fact is, sorry to say, (Alas) that some of my Indian compatriots (old enough to know better) are sad frumps, not to say boorish clowns, in every cannon of Nice Taste, which is a sickening dilemma to such of us who treasure the prestige of our dear Hindustan as our fondest apple of eye. Kindly do not suppose this is a public censure to my old friend Doctor Hatu Ram, not at all, certainly not. All the same when he is being told of his malpractices in gentle reproof, and how he should correctify them, then surely he ought to evince warm gratitude in lieu of kicking up a rowdy shindy, and pulling angry faces against me his Society Mentor, especially in a steam-ship of alien nationality, such as we are now voyaging (Italian Lloyd Triestino).

Let us now, therefore, consider a party of evening dinner such as is common practice in elegant Society. Doubtless most young Oriental chaps have witnessed European tables (usually called "festive Boards")

duly garnished for the feast and teeming with such a swarm of fashionable utensils, that the poor fellow's wits become addled and utterly bashful, such as, "Oh God, which do I eat and drink with which, and how?" I shall now proceed to explain all the business.

*Programmes*.—These are known either as "Bills of Fare" (Low Society), or "Menus" (High Society). The order of the foods is nearly always the same. E.G., Item No. 1 is Antipasti or Hors Doeuvres, (see below). Item No. 2 is Soup, Item No. 3 is fishes, etc., etc. When you seat down yourself at a party do not loose your head. To start, just pass your eye over the programme, quite casually as of a young *blase*, and man-about-town. On no account should you evince any vulgar avidity to regale your belly. After this, you may unfold your serviette, which is a small sort of cotton towel retained across the thighs and utilised for wiping purposes. Then you should begin to chitter-chat to your neighbours easily and lightly. Religious or controversial subjects should be eschewed, but you may aptly pro-pound some "Bon-Mots," humorous anecdotes, or witty conundrums, which are always very popular.

*Knives*.—Sometimes you receive up to 6 various knives all of which have a different intention. Very sorry, I can't explain them all but one good rule to remember is that for handling (a) Antipasti (b) Fishes (c) Deserts, the blade of knife is silver metal not iron, and ditto ditto for forks; if such silvery knives are unfurnished, by all means make a good fuss with the steward or waiter, which will show that you are up to snuff and know whats what, so as not to be foisted off with inferior substitutes. I need hardly say that knives are confined to cutting, slicing, and smearing, and should never be raised to the human lips to convey foods thereto which is a shocking mannerism.

*Finger Bowls*.—This is an article over which considerable confusion persists. Since a long time I myself

was rather dubious about these small metal basins, for years ago Mr. Cocky Lemon, as a joke (rather a coarse joke surely, and worthy of an ex-private-soldier and sanitary corporal as he was) informed to me that they are spittoons or cuspidors. They are not that at all. Their purpose is to cleanse the hands such as we Indians do with bowl and ewer of brass. Under each basin you will espy a lacy item called D'Oyley. Both D'Oyley and Finger-Bowl must be removed from off your dessert-plate and neatly deposited on the table to your *left* side. After which you may scrable yout fingers in the water one at a time, there should be no scrubbing of the hands. When the hand is cleansed, wipe it off on your serviette, which should not be refolded but scrunched slightly into a tidy ball and deposited to the *right* side.

*Wine-Glasses.*—This is another stumble-block for the dinner tyro or neophyte. There are so many of these all different shapes and sizes that without coloured diagrams drawn to scale, it is quite impossible to explain which is which, *i.e.*, this for sherry-wine, that for hock-wine, or claret-cups, or Benedictines, or cocktails. The fact is in Europe country the number of alcoholical beverages is over 4,000, according to Mr. Cocky Lemon, so naturally even experts in Etiquette sometimes make faults. I personally once or twice have been guilty of selecting a wrong glass or goblet. If you do this perchance, I think, the best plan is to exclaim with frank merriment, “Oho! I have taken the wrong glass, I am getting so short-in-sight and myopic I cannot detect them clearly, especially as they are transparent. Dear, Dear Me, I must really take to specks.” Such a remark, if accompanied by appropriate gestures of blinking and glaring as though partly blinded, will satisfy the severest critic that the blunder is anyhow not due to ignorance of Etiquette and Polite Behaviour. Kindly note also that the stem of a drinking vessel should be held lightly (toyed with, one may say) between

two fingers only (index and middle) the remaining fingers being elegantly spread outwards in the shape of a fan.



*Set-too and Guzzle them up by means of his soup-spoon*

*Spoons.*—This implement though a great favourite in our oriental feasts has fallen into desuetude in Western Europe and is now definitely unfashionable. The broad rule about spoons is always take a Fork if you can, and eschew all spoons, except when the victuals you are about to consume are so wishy-washy (such as soup or gooseberry fools) as will dribble through the prongs or tines of fork. Then, and then only, may you justly wield a spoon.

I proffer these observations re: spoons, because only two days since I witnessed a rather shocking scene in which the injudicious and wilful use of a spoon by Doctor Hatu Ram was a subject of much unfavourable comment. Kindly note that we have all safely embarked ourselves on a steamer-ship of Italian Nationality bound to U. K. and I was the Amphitryon, or Host, of a Gala-Party graced by some highly eminent Indian Gentlemen including Rai Sahib Bhagwan Das, erstwhile Honorary President Municipal Council Rae

Bareli, (from the 1st Class Saloon), and Mr. Ganda Singh landlord and bungalow proprietor, Sitapur City. Out of my pure good nature, and thinking to afford him an insight into the smart social whirl, I also invited Doctor Hatu Ram. Being rather fidgety lest he may not commit some ungentlemanly blunders (for by birth the worthy doctor is distinctly a bumpkin) I instructed him to arrive 15 minutes too early and furnished to him a typed foolscap, containing full directions how he should do and how he should not do, and far from being much thankful for all my troubles, he just rumpled up that paper and venting a smutty oath cast it out by the port's hole. Comment is quite superfluous, I think. Just then the Rai Sahib came along so I said nil.

What was my amazement and pardonable shirtness, when the Antipasti were passed to and fro, to see Doctor Sahib, in flat defiance of all my admonitions vide above, to set-tee and Guzzle them up by the means of his soup-spoon, including sardine fishes, pickled olives and gherkins, eggs to order, and some white flesh believed to be lobsters, all of which spicy tid-bits needless to say should be conveyed to the lips by a special sort of fork with three prongs. Seeing the other guests of adjacent tables regarding his barbarisms with marked contempt, I indicated him by a kick below the table, how he is manipulating the wrong tool altogether, but no, he just kicked me back twice, and ate away more gluttonously than ever thereby blackening my face as his host, say nothing of polluting the prestige of the Indian Intelligentzia class.

Re : Soup, to imbibe this comestible graciously demands considerable "Tact" and you have to be very careful about it because most occidental hostesses are judging a young stranger by his behaviour in souping. If you must tilt up your dish of soup, this tilting must never be *towards* you but *away* from you. Secondly,

all ingurgitating noises and gutteralities including belches must be sternly repressed. Thirdly, you must handle your spoon with a graceful wrist-motion (not elbow) drinking not from the end but the side and allowing the liquid to trickle down by force of gravity *via* your neck, wind-pipe, oesophagous, etc. to its appointed bourne (abdomen).

As regards our Sikh friends I really do not know what to advise them re: souping. Mr. Ganda Singh was clearly a passionate soup-lover ordering three helps. This in itself is a marked solecism. Sikh gentlemen should remember that they are handicapped by moustachios and bushy-beards. Do not think, my Sikh friends, that I am cavilling against this hairy observance, which I admit freely is founded on the most holy tenets of Religion, just like your wearing of drawers and iron bracelets. I am far from saying Snip off your hairs, God may forbid and Heaven Forfend! But if you retain on your visages these hirsute growths I strongly recommend you to abandon souping in the public eye, certainly not the thick sorts like "Crême D Amandes", which was the one we had at my party. If however, you are too hungry and must drink soups, then my advice is have a section of rubber piping hose prepared in advance, which can be carried neatly in the vest pocket, utilising when necessary in an unostentatious manner.

We had one rather disagreeable experience in our dinner party on account of globe artichokes. The rule about eating this fruit is perfectly plain. *Dislodge a few leaves on to the fork, and having raised to the mouth gently press with the teeth and tongue to obtain the juicy flesh, subsequently withdrawing the sucked leaves by the fork. The human hand should on no account come into contact.* This regulation is abstracted from a standard work, but all the same, I think, the author has inadvertently forgotten to consider electric punkha-fans. I had

taken about six or eight leaves and, having duly sucked, was in the act of conveying them on my fork to my edge-of-plate according to directions. Suddenly a windy blast came from the fan and wafted them right away like green butterflies, until they settled mostly upon a stoutish Rumanian lady at the table behindhand. Obviously this was a sheer accident, in fact an act of God really, such as might easily occur in a cyclone or typhoon. So it was shocking bad form for her to raise such a rumpus and summoning the Head Steward and Asst. Purser complaininp against me. The Rai Sahib agreed cordially that my manners were the most gentlemanly he ever saw, in spite of continuous vituperation and invective from that Rumanian lady.

Of course, that Tom Fool and Jackanapes Doctor Hatu Ram would naturally grasp this opportunity to argue that "Serve you right. That will teach you to adhere to our good old Indian customs of eating by fingers instead of balancing foodstuffs on forks in your fashionable way." Of course, these arguments are beneath contempt. Such an accident as Globe-Artichoke Leaflets impinging on a Rumanian lady at a behindhand table would hardly happen again in a 1,000 years, I should surmise. Anyhow, my conscience is perfectly clear. I faithfully performed all the precepts laid down for the mastication of globe-artichokes. We finite Beings cannot do more than that. We cannot peer into the mysterious Womb of the Future, we must just DO OUR DUTIES and leave the results of our actions to the ininscrutable wisdom of Almighty Providence, don't You agree ? Eh ?

I have since been credibly informed that the Rumanian lady is not a pure Rumanian at all but a Koutso-Vlach from a place called Nitchevo. I can quite believe this. She seems to be a very disorderly character. But kindly do not jump to conclusions that I am unchivalrously-addicted to the Fair Sexes, quite the Reverse

Good Heavens Alive ! Indeed, such mottoes as " Noblesse Oblige", " Place Aux Dames," " Cherchez la Femme," etc., are habitually on my lips. But chivalry seems to be wasted on this lady, only this morning she has twice again been reviling me re : artichokes in a very unladylike fashion.

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## MOSTLY ABOUT MACARONIS

As adumbrated in antepenultimate Essay, we have all now safely embarked ourselves in one Italian steamer-ship bound for U. K. Everything O. K. so far except for Doctor Hatu Ram who has lost his first-aid satchel including stomach-pump and stethoscope, and he says I must pay for this which is pretty cool impudency surely, seeing that it is due to his own clumsy bungling.

I have a nice cabin but sorry to say owing to heavy current exes and short cash my dear wife Pipi must go 3rd Economic Class, because I had to stump up half-fare both ways not only for Doctor Sahib (in return for free medical attendance) and also for Mr. Cocky Lemon coming along as Manager-designate for my Racing Establishment.

In this connection I am utterly disgusted against Professor Yajnavalkya Mahamahopadyaya, Astrologer of Benares City, promised faithfully to come along too and cause by his magic powers racehorses to run along more fastly than they ever ran before, and now at the last second writes the most bumptious letter I ever perused that he cannot cross the Ocean to travel along with untouchables (!!!) I am inclined to think he is a pure hocus-pocus and Mumbo-Jumbo, forswearing his plighted troth like this, and if any reader is thinking to have dealings with him re amulets, horoscopes, love-philtres, etc., etc., I strongly recommend prior reference to me C/o Editor, on which full particulars will gladly be furnished.

I must go along soon to visit my dear wife and Doctor Sahib, and satisfy myself they may have all

they require, but just now I am credibly informed that owing to the tossing of ship on the bounding billows, they are both vomitatively inclined, so doubtless will prefer me to come in at a later date, which would be more opportune.

On arriving on board I may say that I had a "delightful surprise" and I grasp this opportunity of tendering warm thanks to a certain (anonymous) donor for a very nice outfit and topping present, *viz.*, a spanking nautical outfit all complete with accoutrements, haberdasheries, etc. For many years I have always insisted that for marine wear, you must always don proper marine togs, so as to ensure due honour and consideration from the ship's company, otherwise they will take you for a mere land-lubber and treat accordingly. Doubtless my nameless beneficiary has been aware of this; anyhow no more timely gift could well be imagined I am sure.

The post-mark is Muzaffarnagar, and the calligraphy is certainly effeminate sex I should surmise. So kindly, Miss or Madam as case may be (say nothing of Shrimati, Musammat, or What-not, accept my loving appreciation for receipt of your registered package which includes :—

*Item* One D. B. Blue Reefer Pea-Jacket superfine cloth, embellished with Epaulettes and brass-buttons, crown and anchor pattern.

*Item* Blue nautical hat or cap to match, with brim of black patent leather.

*Item* Two snow-white trowsers of duck-cloth, commonly called "ducks."

*Item* Two shoes, brown and white parti-coloured, which Mr. C. Lemon says are technically called "Co-Respondents Shoes," very smart and tasty.

*Item* Marine Instrument called "Sextant" manufactured by one of our world-famous Indian Iron

Works, which is a handsome tool but appears to be temporarily in disorder.

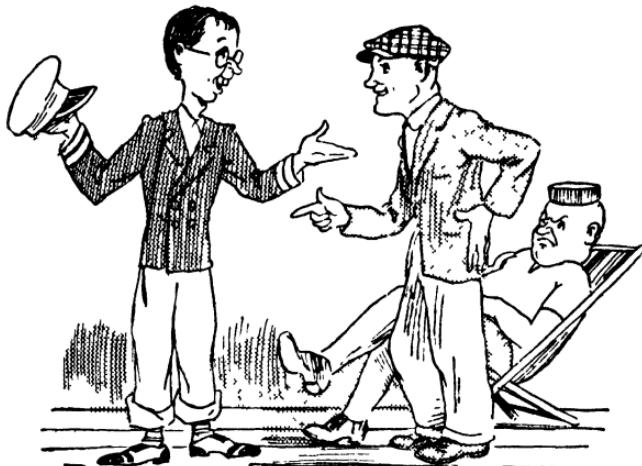
I should say the total disbursement must be easily Rs. 100, including packing and postal charges. There is only one petty criticism I would venture to level, re the ducks vide above they are shaped on the Jodhpur principle of breeches, *i.e.*, full and free across the thigh but constricted at the knees down to the ankles. The fashion for marine trowsers is rather opposite to this, *e.g.*, should be "bell-bottom", and rather tight across the thighs on the other hand.

But never mind, do not suppose I am casting reproaches, Good Heavens. No, as Mr. C. Lemon wittily says we must not look at a gifted horse in the mouth (*e.g.* to ascertain what his age is). I am really delighted at the ducks. As for length, they are long certainly, but the Chinese washerman (who is also a very decent sempstress) says he can easily rectify. It is simply a case of snipping five inches off the bottom (that is to say the end terminating at the ankles of course). Perhaps it may interest readers to learn what precisely are my bodily measurements. These are they :— Waist 2 ft.  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches ; from point of hip bone to ankle 3 ft. 1 inch ; from fork to ankle 2 ft.  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches ; round breast 2 ft. 10 inches. Kindly bear these statistics in mind in case any further togs are presented.

Mr. C. Lemon and I had quite an altercation (but perfectly amicable I need hardly say) re : the Yachting Hat. All such hats must bear an inscription emblazoned in golden tissue around the brim or rim. I was rather in favour of some reference to the "Royal Yacht Squadron", membership of which Society is well known to convey high social distinction. But Mr. C. Lemon said No. If you take the name of the R. Y. S. in vain, you are liable to 21 years rigorous imprisonment on a charge of *lese majeste* and blasphemy ! Can there be such a drastical law as this ? No wonder is it that the

Bolshevists are gaining ground politically in U. K., if this is the sort of legislature that goes on.

Anyway, better be on the safe side, so I thought to emblazon on my hat just the name of some private yacht such as S. Y. Valkyrie or S. Y. Nur Mahal or Nivedita. (Kindly note the pronunciation of "Yacht" which must rhyme with "Dart", "Start", etc.) Mr. C. Lemon however was strongly in favour of "Saucy Arethusa" and, as this is a pretty nomenclature of historic association, I agreed freely, and so now the hat inscription is "S. Y. Saucy Arethusa" and everyone is in raptures.



*Mr. C. Lemon and I had quite an altercation re : the Yachting Cap.*

I just went to see our party in the 3rd Economic. I must say Doctor Sahib presents a sorry sight, wearing one dirty singlet and knicks of khaki doosootie. Also his boots are not attached with buttons or laces as is the proper fashion with boots, but with two clips of base-metal at the sides. In fact sartorially he is a sad sloven. But what the absurd thing is they are all addressing him as "Your Highness"!! This will raise a great guffaw throughout the length and breadth of India, I venture to prognosticate, for it is quite clear that when he came

“on board” his trick was to suborn some loose-wallah to come along and address him “Maharajah Ji” in terms of deep obeisance, so as to pretend to be a ruling prince travelling incognitously! Did you ever hear such humbugging pretension? Besides it is acting a lie, as I pointed out to him (not in anger of course but rather sorrow) on which he retorted me that I am a far worse liar wearing on my brow the name of steam-yacht that is non-existent except in my perverted imagination. Of course this argument is arrant clap-trap, there is nothing deceitful in my action whatever, I definitely mean to purchase a yacht on arrival in U. K. and I shall dub this yacht “Saucy Arethusa” so surely I have ample right (if I wish) to don the hat before the yacht, as the yacht before the hat, Eh?

The passengers aboard-ship seem rather a mixed lot. I should say practically none are conversant with the Etiquette of the High Seas, for I specially noted that not a single person saluted the Quarter-deck on his (or her) arrival. The right hand should be raised in a circular and stately motion to the brim or rim of hat, remain there at rest for a brief period, then cut away to the side without ostentation or fuss. However I saw that the Captain of vessel remarked this graceful mark of courtesy vide above and clearly appreciated my punctilio, because he was afterwards looking at me very intently through his ocular glasses for about 10 minutes duration I should think.

I seem already to be a marked favourite with all-and-sundry and much sought after for social amenities, debating societies, athletics, and *hoc genus omne*. One Sicilian Lady has been heard to declare I am the veriest life-and-soul of the party. But despite my high popularity, I remain perfectly free from any trace of swagger nor bombast and just the same jolly-chap to the meanest wretch I need hardly say, indeed. I have just presently been solicited to partake in a contest (mixed

gents and ladies) at the Deck Quoits Tournament. I have high hopes to enhance our Indian prestige in this difficult pass-time, and I will inform you result later on in due course.

\* \* \* \* \*

What an awfully true saying is that "In the midst of life we are in death" or words to that affect. A frightful calamity has transpired in the interim, and what the consequences may be God knows, the imagination boggles at the prospect. Only about 2 hours since I was blythe and care-free young babu, partaking my foods in the "saloon" along with a distinguished bevy mostly of the Italian nationality when there came a dish of Macaronis. Now I myself have small stomach for said comestible, being decidedly unhealthy, and inducing flatulence, also is a hard puzzle to eat in the Italian fashion (*i.e.*, Forking) so speaking jocosely and using the Italian language (to which I am now rather a crack and dab after some close study of "Hugo Simplified") I exclaimed that "No thanks. I abominate your Macaroni." The bad luck was, instead of saying "Macaroni" I said "Mussolini", *i.e.*, a perfectly innocent *lapsae linguae* such as anyone might incur in a fit of inadvertence don't you agree, specially as we were just before chatting re: the Great Dictator. In less than half a tick every Italian person of all ages and sexes jumped upwards and rushed at me in a tearing passion screaming "Alla Morte" (which is to say "To the Death") "Throw him to the sharks", etc., etc., I have no hesitation that I should have been linched and massacred to pieces there and then, but the Captain of Ship and Chief Steward came fastly running with six able-bodied jacks-tars, and snatched me from the very jaws of death out into the passage and thence thumped me along to my own cabin narrowly averting a determined attack just outside the Gentlemen's Lavatory. So here I am banged and bumped to blazes, locked up in solitary

confinement having a sentry on the door with guns and swords. I shouldn't think in the history of the world there has been such an abominable outrage in a nation claiming itself civilised, and I confidently anticipate some pretty sharp ructions in the Chancellories of Europe.

Even as I pen these lines the rioters are still rushing about up and down in the passage screaming out blood-thirsty cries against me I have ordered to the sentry that he should certainly fire his gun at them if they may not disperse off but he does not seem to understand very plain, for he levelled his piece not at the revolutionaries but through the door straight at me baring his teeth in a very sinister fashion. I myself think he is also "Fascisti" which is an ominous augury.

I forgot to say that re : my foods and grubs, they are insinuated through the window (technically called port's hole) by an Italian jack-tar sitting on a rope ladder, and you may well enquire what exactly is this food. It is just cold macaronis included in a small bucket or pail, and clearly this is done simply to tease me, knowing full well I could not forbear to swallow even one linear inch of it. I have informed all this to Mr. Cocky Lemon who has kindly come to visit me in my affliction (conversation per key-hole) and he says he will bring me some Bologna Sausage (Mortadella di Bologna). Admittedly this is not a victual that any Hindu with orthodox susceptibilities would voluntarily select to eat, but anything however impure religiously is better than these vile macaronis. No more just now, you will be glad and proud to hear I am bearing up bravely.

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## “INDIA, MY INDIA”

Only last week I was a heart-broken captive in close carceration on the charge of uttering disrespectful sentiments towards Signor Benito Mussolini, the great Italian Dictator, and practically under sentence of death by Shark's bite. Now this terrible misunderstanding has been happily elucidated (due to a mere innocent tongue-slip as already explained) and we are all jolly palls and boon-cronies once again, and during all this morning I have been busy drinking Good Healths, such as “Viva Il Duce Illustrissimo!” along with Italian gentlemen and ladies who, 5 days since, were thirsting after my life's blood, but now are showering on me every sort of expensive intoxication including Sicilian Kummel (three), Capri Bianco (four or five) and Chianti Rosso (lost count), and it's not a bit of good saying you have sworn the pledge and strict T. T. they just guffaw at that as a prime good joke and order another bottle.

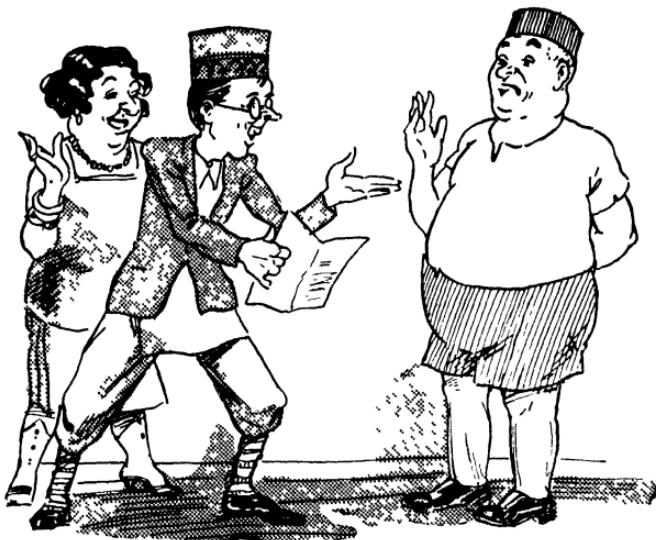
Certainly they are now all kindness itself, and Life would be a rosy dream of Paradice if 't were not for that rotten monkey Pipi was bringing aboardship at Bombay, secreted into her bosom (*Rhesus Vulgaris*). I was telling her over and over that such surreptitious introduction of monkies was flatly forbidden vide Quarantine Regns. But No, she must have him, he is such a “duckie.” I will freely admit that in external appearance he is a pretty brute but in habits and character he is quite opposite, and what is worse he has now broken himself loose and nobody can discern his lurking place or lair. In addition to insanitary leanings involving indiscretions and nuisances in the Captain's cabin beyond the bounds of decency, he appears to have strong tendencies to Iconoclasm and Vandalism, if

indeed a mere ape can reason so deeply as that. Anyhow he has wantonly crashed to bits so many classical busts, torsos, and graven images that it can hardly be fortuitous, including Alexander the Great, Socrates, Saint Athanasius, and Cornelia, the Mother of the Gracchi. The Captain has become a regular cross bugbear to me, alleging they are all authentic antiquities, and the best Carrara marble, but this I can never believe, the fragments appear to me spurious terracottas or even common cement stuff. As for the pains and troubles I have done in order to apprehend the truant you would hardly believe, laying nooses of string in every likely place baited with tempting fruits of banana and nut and now there is talk of the boatswain (pronounced Boosun) caught his toe in one of my nooses, and tripped down the staircase incurring a nasty somersault. So I have addressed a circular memo to all concerned relinquishing all rights of ownership in the missing ape and repudiating any sort of responsibility for his behaviours, so let us hope this is the end of him.

We are now about to reach into Egyptian waters, so I was awfully touched to receive a delightful surprise, *viz.*, an address of welcome (per wireless beam system) from the Indian Domiciled Community of Port Said, offering me the Freedom of the City and warmly requesting to deliver an address or lecture, preferably on subject Modern India, on my arrival. It was signed Boohoo Mal, but perhaps, spelling has been mutilated in transmission. Anyhow it was highly flattering proposition such as might turn any other man's head easily, so you can guess that I threw myself into the project with my usual zealous alacrity. The first thing necessary was a 1st class map of Atlas of our Great Indian Peninsular, and in the end I procured as a loan a ripping example of the cartographers art 5½ feet wide, 3¾ feet long.

As for the lecture itself it was already in my head, so the preparation of any notes, facts and figures would

be quite supererogatory. If there is one lecturer on earth master of his subject, I venture to say it is me on India. I can easily discourse re: India (and, indeed, have done before now among friends) for 6 hours concurrently, hardly drawing breath, so a mere hour-or-two is a perfect flea-bite. But, apart from subject matter, my speaking voice has been adjudged by competent critics to be mellifluous to a degree, and an ecstasy to the ear, just like the best sort of singing only more so. I say this in no spirit of bombast, such talents are a gift, that is all. I decided that the title I should select would be "India, my India."



*Inclined to make a poo-poo of the whole thing.*

So then I was running to the 3rd Economic Class to import the glad tidings to Doctor Hatu Ram and exhibited to him Mr. Boohoo Mal's wireless message, flushing the while rosy-red with bashful modesty. What was my painful surprise, he evinced not the slightest delight at this signal honour to a dear colleague and old-pall, but rather huffy on the other hand and inclined to make a poo-poo of the whole thing.

So thinking he was doubtless testy by non-receipt of an invite to the Entertainment, I then and there sat down and generously penned out a “Special Pass” for my lecture filling in Doctor Sahib’s full name and designation, and stipulating “Front Row.” Can you believe it, he definitely refused to accept that free coupon, and all his excuse was that he had other fish to fry in Port Said than to listen to my “spouting” which he had heard 1,000 times before *ad nauseum*. Could jealousy go farther than that? Hardly, I think. Of course, after these words, I just left him to stew in his own grease. In reply to such incredible impudency as his, tacit dignity is always the best repartee.

As for the scene of my reception by the town Committee on the Port Said Harbour-side, you never saw a more gala tamasha. Firstly, there was the Address-of-Welcome charmingly inscribed on sumptuous vellum, and couched in highly erudite verbiage. This was sonorously enunciated by Mr. Boohoo Mal and greeted with warm plaudits from far and near. In the interim two very decent young virgins were strewing rose-petals in my path and sweeping to and fro in the mazy evolutions of the dance. There were also a number of red carpets tastefully displayed.

After that I was profusely garlanded with wreaths of laurel on my brow, and Bougainvillea buds and blossoms round my neck, and lavishly squirted with costly perfumes and unguents until I became as odiferous, if not more so, as a blooming nosegay.

So then having formed into a procession we all wended along to the Lecture Hall, not an edifice of much architectural or acoustic merit I must say (it used to be the Municipal Fish Market) but everything would have been quite alright there too, if only the organising Committee (especially that fat old fool Mr. Boohoo Mal) had done their simple duty, *viz.*, to rigourously exclude all unauthorised persons. As

it was, any bazar riff-raffs and ragtails could freely come in without let or hindrance, and duly did so, and I attribute the whole trouble to this and nothing else.

From the very start I became the target of some awfully rude behaviour from the back-benchers, and especially a one-eyed gentleman (?) with small pocks and a very nefarious face, who was wearing a red fez and a green neck tie or rather cravat. According to Mr. Boohoo Mal, he was a Mr. Sayad Ali, pleader, from Hyderabad, Sind, which I can well believe. He kept on thwarting me with his silly interjections such as "May I ask Sir, why your lecture is billed under the title of India, *MY* India? It is not *YOUR* India. It is mine just as much as yours. I must call on you to revoke your title which is offensive to me and to many others in this Assembly-Room."

Did you ever hear such a specious and catchpenny bamboozle? And what, you may well ask, was Mr. Boohoo Mal doing all this time? It is the Chairman's bounden duty to stamp out this sort of Goondaism and wrecking tactics with an iron hand, and if necessary personally ejaculate the offender. But the fact is Mr. Boohoo Mal showed himself to be a pukka milk-sop and an absolute blue-funk against the rowdy element of the congregation so he agreed to hold a Committee Meeting and put the resolution to vote of majority. Altogether we were voting five times by show-of-hands as is customary, and each time owing to shindies and hubburbs breaking out ubiquitously, the five counts were all different, so nobody could say whether it was passed or not. Thrice the Noes were in the Ascendency and twice the Ayes, and all the time the rumpus was getting worse.

In the end, thinking to quell the rioters by the hypnotic power of the human eye, I grasped my "pointer" and rapped it loudly on the rostrum calling to "Order, Order," on which a stinking egg (Hen's

I presume, though by the size might easily be Goose’s or Swan’s) whissed through the air and missing me by a fraction brust upon my map of India, which was pinned on a black-board, impinging in the Multan and Ferozepore Districts and streaming down into Rajputana. It would be no exaggeration to say that handsome map was virtually ruined.

Then I saw that things were taking a very serious turn, so quickly took up a position behind that black-board ready for emergencies. From that coin of vantage I was keenly conning the ranks of the opposition, and suddenly with a sickening pang at my heart, I espied among their back-benchers four stupendous negroids about 7 feet high and practically nudities. Their eyes were rolling grimaciously and their teeth were filed into sharp fangs and in their hands (which were as big as my head easily) were terrible sorts of weapons called “Knob-Kerries” far more lethal than any of our Indian lathis. And then suddenly in a flash, I apprehended what I ought to apprehend long ago, that I am involved in a *Communal Affray*. I had never thought to meet this communalism in Egypt Country, but only in India and its dependencies. But the situation was perfectly clear. On one side were arranged self, Mr. Boohoo Mal, and about sixty Hindu gentlemen of the Mercantile and clerky orders, and on the other side was this Mr. Sayad Ali with his Arabs and Egyptians and Ethiopians and Zooloos and Abyssinians.

With me to think is to act. There was clearly only one thing to do, so as to avoid a perfect holocaust of innocent lives, *viz.*, to remove the apple of discord, *i.e.*, the Lecturer. It is not my habit to flee from the “bright face of danger” quite the reverse, I need hardly say. But in this crisis, I must think of others and put my own pride into my pocket. So stooping adroitly behind my black-board I was out of the back door in two ticks, into a street called Suk El Fayoum, and there

in front of me was a taximeter-cab in charge of a large Egyptian fellow.

Leaping into Cab, I cried out "Drive off top speed" The driver said "Where to?" and I replied "To the Pyramids" (being the first place I could think of). We went tearing off through the dusky darkness like a flaming comet or metior and soon reached in a howling dessert on which I saw very plain, I should have said, "Drive to the Ship." But try as I would and bang on the glass as I might, I could never succeed to make that driver hear even one word owing to rattles, clatters, rumbles, and squeaks.

After about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour he stopped by himself, and said with a rather murderous gesture "Fulus ! Fulus !" *i.e.*, Show me your money. I showed him all I had, *viz.*, one English Postal Order for five shillings, 11 liras Italian, and eight four-anna pieces (nickle), at which, having seized it all and spat on it, that driver began to swear away like a madfellow and in the end the calous brute pushed me on the sand and emitting a flood of furious verbiage drove off and away in a cloud of dust.

Just think of my situation, penniless, famished, benighted, desserted, absolute stranger to the topography, wearing thin patent pimp-shoes and having simply nothing in my possession except one slender wand (my pointer at the lecture), one dirty black-board jharan or duster, and an assortment of coloured chalks. How I got back is a pure miracle and when I did get back, the ship was gone, I am too lamentable to write any more.

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## HOW I BECAME AN AYAH

In above connection, kindly do not suppose (Good Heavens !) that I should personify a female domestic just out of roguey mischief. I need hardly say no Indian gentleman of the Intelligentzia class would demean to become a vulgar menial of his own free accord, say nothing of diminishing his masculine sex into a lower category. No, No, I was simply forced by Bitter Hobson's Choice. Anyhow I shall now recite all the business, and if said recital would fail to wring out tears of sympathetic condolence from any save an utterly stony bosom, I shall be jolly surprised. In fact I should despair of Human Nature all together.

It is an awfully nasty pill to be marooned, one might almost say Shanghai-ed, in an alien clime, *e.g.*, Port Said, Egypt Country ; steamer-ship gone away ; No Pass-Port ; cash in hand not even one pice ; I was just as one may say a piece of flotsam and jetsam on the Cruel Sea-of-Life, in fact an Utterly Abandoned Wretch. But after shredding a few manly tears I began to comfort myself with various wise saws and pithy apophthegms such as "Come What May ! " "Hey Nonny No ! " "Nil Desperandum." "God's in His Heaven, All's well with the World." After this I felt much refreshed and all my bulldog plucks-and-grits came welling up again, so I began to hurry-scurry here, there, and elsewhere, with my well-known alacrity, seeking how to attain perhaps a free berth in some marine vessel in return for services rendered, so as to rejoin again with my dear family-members gone to U. K.

There was especially one "Port Trust Labour Bureau" in which the Manager was quite a decent young British chap named Mr. Roger Jolly, and there

I used to hie along five and even six times per diem. But no, he was always telling me the same sad answer, *viz.*, that Nobody wants a Travelling Tutor, or Confidential Secretary, or Lecturer on Economic Problems, or even Commercial Traveller. You will be lucky these days if you get a job even as Ship's Scullion. Very sorry, but what can do ?

About the 41st visit to that Labour Bureau, Mr. R. Jolly (who was rather a larky fellow) passed a remark to me grinning rather jocosely, that "Its a pity you're a man and not a woman. I could have fixed you up."

Rather mystified as well I might be, I said "Eh? How is that? Kindly elucidate yourself my good sir."

So then he demonstrated to me one Madrassi ayah on yonder bench in the corner, beating her breast and snivelling uproariously, in short evincing clear tokens of deep sorrow and anguish. I said "What about her?"

So then he explained that this wailing-woman is a (Christian) Travelling Ayah named Susie and a regular customer of this Labour Bureau since many years. She is now under contract to sail in a ship for domestical service to U. K. along with a certain Maltese lady by name Madam Mifsud. But in the interim this Susie has been wooed-and-won by an Egyptian beadvendor and Scarab-monger, and could not bear to be parted from her truelove even for one day, so she wants to break her contract. But she can't do that (unless she provides a substitution) if so, she must pay a forfeit of all her security deposit and back-pay too. So naturally the poor ayah was in terrible fuss-and-fidget because she had promised that money to her paramour to purchase a vendor's booth and municipal licence. It was a very sad case but Mr. R. Jolly couldn't alter the rules.



*Can you stand there with dry eyes and look on this miserable female*

Meantime my bosom was seething and surging with wild hopes and premonitions. Surely this was the Finger of All Mighty Deity guiding me my Path-of-Destiny. Apart from my sex (after all a secondary consideration) I should make an excellent Ayah, kind and competent, blythe and industrious, adroit and light-fingered, and warmly addicted to children and brats. Indeed a household treasure or jewel. So straitaway like the good-fellow I always am, I earnestly volunteered to take her place along with Madam Mifsud.

At first Mr. R. Jolly would not hear of it, saying he was only joking and it was as much as his place was worth to fob off on a Maltese lady a masculine ayah in lieu of feminine. But in the end my powerful Rhetorick won his heart. "Can you stand there," (I was saying) "and with dry eyes look on this miserable female wretch who is clearly utterly flummoxed by despair and thwarted passion. Remember we are two strong men, and she is one unfortunate woman, it is our clear duty to cherish her. How can we stand aside with folded arms and

shrugged shoulders, and thus by our criminous apathy shatter Love's Young Dream? Ponder also on her unborn children whose curses shall follow you to the grave. For my part I am ready to go thro' fire and water in her behoof, and I call on you sir to do ditto, ditto." (My verbiage was something like this, not quite so sublime and erudite perhaps but approx.)

So at last Mr. Jolly said "Alright. If you can pass the police and customs as a female ayah, I don't mind. It's not my business to verify the alleged sex of the ayahs on my books. But if you're discovered, don't you drag me into it. I know nothing about it, remember." To this of course I agreed freely as was only fair.

You should have seen the glorious face of beatification on that poor ayah when I intimated her the glad tidings that a substitution for her (or *Badli* as we say) has been found, and so she could flee forthwith into her lover's arms bearing her dowry (security deposit and arrears of pay). This happy spectacle alone was ample guerdon to me for all my dik and trouble. All the same she wasn't nearly so pleased when she ascertained that this *Badli* was going to be me. However I was soon soothing down her misapprehensions pointing out that after one or two day's good tuition and if supplied by her with all proper female togs and appurtenances, I would guarantee to be a 1st Class Ayah in no time, and quite indetectible. On which she commenced to giggle and sniggle to any extent, at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  giggling  $\frac{1}{2}$  crying. So in the end all was merry as a marriage bell.

In case any male reader may be meditating female personification I can impart him some good hints and wrinkles, *viz.*,

(a) Walking. This is a tricky item, so kindly observe the directions carefully. Firstly you must never stump and stride along in the

bold masculine fashion but trip it delicately. In fact you must rather simper and mince your way along. Do not swing your arms but fold them neatly under your sari. The posterior should be wagged freely to and fro and *vice versa*.

(b) Talking. This is the most difficult puzzle of all. The thing is you must seek to throw out your voice by Head Notes in the Upper Register of your vocal chords. Only in this way you can produce notes technically called "Soprano", approximating to the shrillness of effeminate voices. In the end I achieved good-success though a bit squeaky perhaps, and not so melodious as my own rich tones of tenor voice. But after all many ladies and women are speaking squeakily, so never mind that.

(c) Behaviour. Above all be coy and rather fearful. For instance when interpolated by any gentleman stranger, you must evince alarm, and sharply cast down your gaze upon the earth as though confounded by bashful shame. But you should also be a little coquettish too. To do this, keep your face averted as before, and roguishly peep upwards at him through your outspread fingers, then ever so quickly look down again, accompanied by a faint smirk of the lips. If you can blush-and-flush do so certainly.

(d) Clothes and Haberdasheries. Of course you must select these according to the class of female to be represented. I myself have 3 bust-bodices or stomachers (loaned by Susie of course) 1 petticoat (Susie was short of these) 2 saris, one being a very fashionable toilet with a border of blobs and squiggles, a nice Neck-Lace and earrings (filigree) and some

really lovely anklets of massy silver garnished with sweet teeny-weeny bells which, as I tripped along, twinkled like fairy chimes. I declined to adopt any nose-ring (nut) being awfully incommodious and also demanding surgical operation (hole in nostril).

(e) Cosmetics. Antinomy stuff of course is good for eyes and makes them sparkle like twin stars. Re: complexion, I used the same as Susie, *viz.*, Saffron Paste which must be smeared on freshly twice per diem at least. Don't forget that tears or profuse perspiration will ruin it. Also do not forget to shave your beard finely, otherwise detection is a dead cert.

In addition to all this, as per list above, Susie was instructing me many ladylike accomplishments such as hair-dressing, fine-sewing, *e.g.*, "hemstitch", darning, including repairs to "ladders" in silk stockings, until on the aftermath of second day I was really a very decent skivvy, though not perfect of course. It was in crotchetting that I showed special talent, in fact even outstripping my governess, and in my pocket of bust-bodice I was always transporting a wooly sort of tea-cosey along with a petty tool called "Crotchet-Hook." So whenever opportunity offered I would squat down in the ayah's fashion and proceed to crotchet away with nimble fingers.

Now you may think it rather a difficult puzzle that a male man should engage himself to a Maltese lady and succeed to embark himself on a British steamer-ship, portrayed as a female ayah. But no, not at all. It was as easy (as Mr. Cocky Lemon says) as kissing the back of your hand. I was rather funky about my pass-port which had Susie's name on it and also her photo for identification. But the Customs usher (or whatever is his title) never even insisted me to draw

aside my sari, but just shouted "Pass along please", and so I did.

As for Mrs. Mifsud, she was delighted with my apparition, as indeed she well ought, for I was a down-right smart wench as brisk as bee and bright as button. There is no Mr. Mifsud here but there is a Master Angelo Mifsud Aetat 5½ and sorry to say he seems to be a very nasty and nefarious urchin treating me like dirts. The worst of it is Madam Mifsud spends all the livelong day performing Jig-Saw Puzzles in the Saloon. She has a whole trunkful of these puzzles, I should surmise her to be kind-hearted but weak-witted. I would not complain re: this recreation of Jig-Saws except that I am left to amuse Master Angelo, which is a shocking humility for a highly intellectual babu.

My winsome ways have won me a host of friends and I am already a prime favourite with highs and lows. The Ship's Carpenter, whose name (Nickname?) apparently is Chips, (British extraction) has kindly offered me to sleep in the "Starboard Sail-Locker" (sometimes called Cubby-Hole) in lieu of a mat outside Madam Mifsud's cabin which is the usual dormitory for ayahs. Of course, Madam Mifsud raised loud ructions re: this, insisting me to be closely adjacent in case Master Angelo may be frictious by night. Of course this is Rot-and-Rubbish and I have stood very firmly, pointing out that How indecent would it be if a good-woman would sleep in a public passage like this at the mercy of any comparative stranger, so she has now shut up and gone back to her puzzles.

Another vernacular member of the Ship's company who has clearly conceived a strong fancy to me is the Head Serang, a Malayan fellow whose name is King Kong. He is always coming along to peer and watch me the while knitting my tea-cosy and is grinning away at me to any extent. The fact is he is absolutely a barbarious savage and clearly believes my tea-cosy

is a fancy sort of hat I am knitting for him! What a preposterous notion, certainly I have given him no encouragement, and indeed have been Chastity itself. The fact is that Beauty may often be a fatal gift to its possessor and I am thinking I ought rather to have concealed my charms in the shape of an ill-favoured hag or even witch. But it is too late now though perhaps I might gradually disembellish myself, because I am feeling highly uneasy about these distasteful advances, especially from such a low-class fellow. Mr. Chips says Report him to the 3rd Officer for soliciting, but I am rather hesitant, these Malay fellows are said to be too much vindictive. But apart from this King Kong and Master Angelo everything is quite alright so far.

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## RACK AND RUINATION

As narrated already, I was obliged to assume the identity of a Ship's Travelling Ayah, along with one Maltese lady called Madam Mifsud, and at 1st my life was all rosy and smiling, any detection appearing a sheer impossibility, but lately doubtful fidgets and carking-cares have been sneaking like Serpents into my Eden and I am bemusing in my heart lest any accidentitious slips and trips may not land me into a very nasty pickle of fish quite likely. For one thing Madam Mifsud is showing clear tokens of unsatisfaction against my work of Ayah, and especially some sharp ructions we had re her nasty brat Master Angelo Mifsud.

Can you believe it, this dastardly urchin actually insinuated one dangerous pyrotcehnic or "firework", surreptitiously below my sari while I was innocently sitting there, which exploded up just like a military bomb-shell, scarifying both my knees of legs and combusting to cinders about 2 sq. ft. (superficial area) from my best sari. And when I complain to Madam Mifsud, what satisfaction do I get? All she says, sniggling apishly, is "Boys will be Boys". Also that Master Angelo is "Following in Father's footsteps" (Mr. Mifsud being an explosive chemist). Thirdly, that after all it was only a "Little Squib". Faugh and Pshaw, Little Squib indeed! This is a whacking fib. It was either a Saint Catherine's Wheel, or a Roman Candle, that I am cock-certain, and very likely both.

One thing is quite sure, nothing shall induce me to amuse Master Angelo any more again. Why, when he touched off that firework, I was in the act of reciting him a pretty poetry called "Little Jane's Canary" and this is what I receive for all my loving care, viz. both

singed knees and a spifflicated sari. I have now gone sick with "Shooting Pains Behind the Eyes" and quite impossible to do a hand's turn of Ayah's work. This is a prime good ailment, for no medical doctors can disprove same, nor there is any dangers of hasty operations such as for E. G. Belly-Pains, on which for two pins, they will slit you up to see what's wrong, but they can't do this behind the eyes, being too risky for the invalid. Doctor Hatu Ram told to me all this himself, so it can be taken as a hard fact.

Another item causing sharp anxiety and dubiety is this Head Serang, King Kong the Malay. He has become more than ever infatuated towards me, although my conduct has been Prudity itself, and whenever I am busily crocheting my tea-cosy he is coming alongside casting sheep's eyes and loving ogles, say nothing of popping the question from time to time. Doubtless, as I can see in my mirror-glass, I am a very buxome and bonny Ayah, or vernacular nurse-maid, so I cannot find it in my heart to condemn him too hardly, and shut up him short and sharp. The fact is he is just a savage Yahoo and Bugaboo, in fact in the scale of human evolution he may be classified as Anthropomorphous but Sub-Human, tattooed all over him, and one ivory ring in his nose, so you may guess how a highly erudite pundit sort of chap would be incommoded by such uncouthly advances. So at long last I was firmly resolved that next time I shall intimate him plump and plain that "Alas, I cannot be yours, My Heart is another's, so kindly cease your unwelcome attentions." Just then a terrible catoclysm transpired in the interim.

I was sitting myself on my beddings in my Cubby-Hole kindly placed at my disposal by the Carpenter-in-Chief, and having removed my feminine wig of (bogus) hair, and was quietly shaving away my cheeks with a keen razor, suddenly the door sprang ajar (I had quite forgotten to lock same, Bad Luck) and there I espied

Madam Mifsud glaring and staring to me as though about to have fits, for her mouth and other portions were working away both up-and-down and sideways but wordlessly. Of course I could not have even one second to conceal my razor and shaving tools, or even expunge the soapy-suds from my jowl, etc., by a towel-cloth. As I sat there with my heart turned to stone, Madam Mifsud advancing swiftly drew her hand rudely around my chin, evoking (of course) a loud scratchy noise, owing to the hairbristles. Thereupon, as though certified that there is no mistake, a flood of terrible abuses emanated from her mouth.

This in Society is called a "Scene", and having in my life undergone many "Scenes", I can safely aver that this was the worst which I have ever been a party to. For about 10 min. approx. I was thus assailed by this flood of verbiage, then at last she desisted to some extent but not, I will wager, of her own wish but breathlessness rather. At first I was appealing to her better nature, let byegones be byegones, forgive and forget, etc. But it was No-Go, all my kind words would butter no parsnips in Madam Mifsud's connection, she was so unruhless as ravening Bengal Tiger or indeed Nether-Millstone.

It was plain as plain that to touch her bowels with the finger of pity was a sheer Non-Possomous. Loath though I am to menace any lady, I had no other redress, sorry indeed as I was, except to employ as one may say the mailed fist in the velvet glove. So knowing well that her lawful husband (the explosive chemist) was arranged to meet her in Marseille, I just insinuated to her that What a *Scandalum Magnum* it would be if on arrival at destination Mr. Mifsud would get the notion in his head that my assumption of female sex was exclusively at the instigation of Madam Mifsud herself, because she had conceived a guilty passion for me, and so, being a warm-hearted chap, I agreed (rather

thoughtlessly) to her whim and consented to ape the ayah just so as not to disappoint a lady, and oblige her on the other hand. What would he say to that, Eh?

At first this suggestion seemed to furiate her to such an acme of madness that I began to fear for her reason. But gradually her Sub-Conscious Ego began to ponder and ruminate on the prospect of such developments as were tactfully adumbrated by me, and what an awkward botheration it would be for her if any such rumours would be bruited abroad, especially with a highly jealous and uxorious hubby such as Mr. Mifsud was credibly alleged to be. In the end, as I could see quite plain, she didn't know what to do. Should she run off *ek dum* to the Captain of Ship and denounce me for being a male man, or should she in her own interest wink her eyes at a slight irregularity and say no more about it?

Well in the end she went off in a very chastened and taciturn demeanour and clearly racking her brain in high perplexity. So you can see that what she will do, or not do, is absolutely on the knees of the gods. I may say that I myself am hopeful but decidedly not sanguine. She has a nasty look on her physiognomy, and has entirely abandoned her daily recreation of Jig-Saw Puzzles which is rather an ominous augury.

After this "Scene", I was feeling internally rather sickish but by force of habit was crocheting away on my tea-cosy when once again there came along my very constant admirer King Kong, and I don't know how it happened quite (I was feeling so unbefriended and homesickly presumptuously, and, after all, this Malay fellow was a chip of Old Asia and hence I surmise a welcome change to me after these Maltese paraclasm). Anyhow, I was fain to inform him how my mistress Madam Mifsud was so cruelly unkind to me, casting aspersions on my bonafides re Travelling Ayah and stigmatizing me to be just a bogus hoax. So then King

Kong became transfused with choleric passion and was all for going off to get his kris (Malay sort of sword) and there and then cut Madam Mifsud's neck. Highly alarmed I said No, No, On no account, but if you will kindly just testify if required that I am familiarly and intimately known to you for years and years, and a genuine and authentic Madrassi ayah of blameless antecedents, then it would be a very good thing. And perhaps ( I added) he could even say that we were engaged to be married, and therefore he could absolutely guarantee my authenticity. At this of course he was as pleased as Punch, and warmly consented with many protestations of delightful affectation and kind regards and soon afterwards 8 bells struck and he said he must be off about his marine business.

After his departure, I began to bewilder myself whether such highly confidential chitterchats along with an untutored savage were not perhaps rather a rash injudicacy, what might such a barbarian do, or not do, in such circs. etc., etc. Just then the 3rd Officer came forward and addressing me (rather in a gruff) said "Please report yourself to the Captain's Cabin immediately and bring your pass-port". Oh my God, in Heavens, how I blenched fearfully and began to inhale my pants all aghast and agog ! "What is up now?" I said to myself over and over. So I swiftly ran to my Cubby-Hole and having adjusted my sari neatly and smeared on a new completion (Saffron Paste and Coco-nut Oil) I went off with faltering feet and poor heart going pit-a-pat and rub-a-dub.

There in that Cabin was sitting the Captain Sahib and in front of him was standing King Kong grinning like Ape or Baboon. Captain said to me "Well Susie" (that was my assumptious name of Ayah) "I learn from my head-serang here, and to my great surprise, that you and he are man and wife and indeed have been married for years. Your pass-port shows you as an unmarried

spinster. This is a serious irregularity. However I don't want to be hard on you, for I suppose your wish was to be near your husband. Well, well, I was young once myself, so I'll say no more about it. But mind, no gallivanting about in the crew's Quarters, that I cannot allow."

All this time I was just saying Nil, my vocal cords being tacitly paralysed by so many startles all at once, and all my brain-organism hardly performing its functions, so, when I exuded away from that Captain's Cabin, I just stumbled and stuttered along to my Cubby-Hole and laid down in a sort of cataleptical trance.

Now perhaps some thoughtless readers, jacks-in-office, arm-chair criticks, etc., may cry "Oho! What is he snivelling about now? Why, this is Good-News not Bad-News. If Madam Mifsud may now denounce Mr. Piche Lal for being a spurious ayah, this evidence from King Kong re previous marriage will surely scotch all that and constitute a spanking Alibi. Then what is he grousing with all this fuss-and-fidget? Why he ought to be a glad cockahoop and thank his lucky stars on the opposite hand."

Wait please, good peoples, and refrain yourselves from hasty judgments, this is not the end of it, my cup of bitter is not yet full. I have now ascertained some facts re this King Kong which absolutely beggar imagination. My informant is the carpenter-in-chief who came around while I was lying supinely prostrate in my Cubby-Hole, and accosted me with marked indignation, such as "What is this talk I hear of your being married all the time to that old devil King Kong? Why, you told me you hated the sight of him. As far as I can see you're a slippery customer that's what you are, coddling me like this. What have you got to say?"

Indeed, what COULD I say. To furnish an adequate repartee seems almost an insoluble problem, such as would even stump Professor Albert Einstein

himself. So then the Carpenter, after spitting and expectorating profusely, informed me that King Kong was a "devil-with-the-girls" and a highly disorderly character, being previously sentenced to 18 months rigorous imprisonment in Penang (Strait Settlements) because he slit off the nose of a poor Chinese girl just out of sexual spite, also other violent outrages. Then, one may well ask, What about me? What will he say and do, if and when he may find out I am no effeminate Ayah but a masculine babu? Will he not surely become utterly mischievous to commit some enormous nuisance against me? The mere slitting of nose will hardly suffice him, Eh?

Oh, what a tingled web we weave when we begin to deceive. The fact is I have got myself flummoxed into what I might term a pukka concatenation of imbroglios; in addition to King Kong (vide above) there is also Madam Mifsud to consider, say nothing of Mr. Mifsud who is alleged to be a highly jealous gentleman and uxorious husband. Then there is the French Police in Marseille who are sure to get ratty about my pass-port, which I suppose is (technically speaking) irregular. Lastly what about my own dear wife Pipi anxiously tarrying for me on the white cliffs of Old England? What will she say anent my intimate hobnobbery with Madam Mifsud in the guise of Madrassi Ayah? Will she just take on trust the true facts and say no more about it? The answer would surely seem to be in the negative. In fact the imagination positively boggles and appalls itself. I wish now I had never seen that rotten Susie, her very nomenclature now stinks into my nostrils.

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LATER ON.—It's all up. My sex of male has been unearthed and the Captain has wirelessed the cirls. to the French Police. They say in reply that I am strictly forbidden to disembark myself at Marseille,

and shall be deported for being an undesirable alien. So far, there are 5 charges proffered against me (a) Travelling along with a false pass-port (b) Believed to be a dangerous maniac or lunatic (c) Stating 26 falsehoods (d) Indecent Behaviours (e) Female Impersonation on The High Seas. Many another man circumvented by such frightful peck-of-troubles would just suicide his own life, and no bones about it.

But NO. That would be the Coward's Act. After all what are we mortal humans but mere pawns whirled to and fro and vice versa at the whims of the Finger-of-Fate? So I shall just resign myself piously to the merciful discretion of The Great Pawn-Broker, vide above.

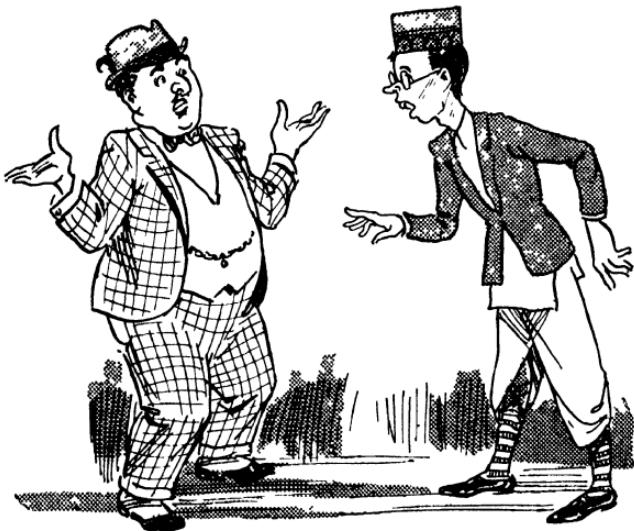
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## MY NEW CASSOWARY

What all I was pitiously suffering since approx. three weeks ago no mortal pen can write, no human tongue can cry, for it is ineffable, and now I am aback again into this rotten Egypt Country, no Pass-Port, cash nil, and reported to H. B. M. Consul-General to be an absolute roguish scamp. What a shocking shame and crying pity ! Where, Oh Where, could I (poor waif) turn for sucker in my brokenhearted woe ! Where indeed ? Then suddenly I was conceiving a splendid notion (vouchsafed from on High doubtless) that Why ! in this very Egypt country there resides my own Armenian bro-in-law Hovhannes, commonly dubbed Han, *i.e.*,  $\frac{1}{2}$  brother to my dear wife Pipi. So straitaway I was prosecuting keen investigations and surely enough the Enquiry Bureau G. P. O. informed to me that Yes. There is a Mr. Hovhannes Tokatlian, registered as Press Agent and Local Secretary to the Grand International Greco-Bulgarian Lottery Syndicate Limited, Address 122 Bis, Rue Hodeidah, Cairo. So my heart began to swell again with joy and gladness.

Certainly I will admit that in past times I did not find Han to be all that a dear fraternal relation might, could, and should be, always sponging and scrounging and telling lies and impudencies, in fact an unmitigated viper sorry to say. But after all, Blood is thicker than water, Let Bygones be Bygones, Forgive and Forget, etc., etc. Besides it was clear that he is now holding a very lucrative avocation, and in ample emoluments to do the needful for his family-members and nears-and-dears, indeed ought to account it a real pleasure. So off I went hurry-scurry, but when I reached into that address Han was not at Home. It did not seem a very grand "Home" certainly, only two

chambers, and rather insanitary, but his typist a young cheeky-faced Armenian Jack-in-office intimated me that If you want to purchase Lottery Tickets, no cheques accepted nor Foreign notes unless endorsed by the Bank, special discount offered for gold, whether bar or dust. I said "No, Certainly not, I am merely arrived to pay a social "call" to my dear bro.-in-law Han, while on my way to Europe, U. K. etc., so do not be impudent please." After which he became rather bashful.



*He threw up his hands groaning aloud*

So then Han came in at last, and certainly his apparition seemed to evince rich affluence, for he was wearing a very smart and swagger suite of nickerbocker sort (technically called plus four) and a green Tyrolean hat decorated with some cockfeathers, also other accessories such as gold chain, silk cravat, pink spats, etc., so once again my bosom began to heave with high hopes.

But when I was explaining all my disasterous story, and how I was temporarily short of the needful, and must have at least £40 for marine passage-money, including accidentals, will you believe it, he threw his

hands upwards groaning aloudy after the fashion of these Armenians, saying that Alas and Alack he hadn't such a huge sum in all the wide world. What a lick-penny skinflint he is to be sure, why he was wearing that amount on his back easily, yet he can't spare an utter pittance for his dear brother he hasn't set eyes on nearly two years. It makes one despair of Human Nature. At the end, after much indecent higgling, he borrowed me £10, but even for that I must sign a bond at 48 percentum. So here I am sleeping like a vulgar vagrant on the ground of office all hugget-mugger and higgledy-piggledy (because Han only has one bed) and I must also assist to cooking and cleaning, which is a shocking humility for a man of my Infra Dig. And kindly note also that this Greco-Bulgarian Lottery is not the only lucrative business Han is connected. He is also Auctioneer, and thirdly Estate-Agent and Valuer. He was always like that having fingers in many pies, and irons in many fires, just like the Fox with his hundred tricks (Aesops Fables). Now this morning he said to me "Please come with me to such and such auction. You may be helpful to me, and it will be nice and jolly fun for you too." So I said "Very Good, certainly I will do." So we wended along into a grand fashionable street where there was a fine mansion at which auction was due to take place of all the contents, and many peoples were beginning to coagulate, such as vernacular furniture-walas, kabaris, etc., walking to and from and peeping and prying all the sale items here there and elsewhere.

So then Han, buttonholing me into a secret corner, began to converse me in surreptitious whispers, and with many winks and leers, that, "Now Lal, just run your eyes over these goods, and look out anything that might contain secret drawers or hidden repositories, and if you find such I will give you 50 piastres for yourself. But do not on any account let the other bidders guess what you are at."

From his behaviour I could see something was up, so, rather vexed, I replied "Why so? What do you mean? I insist to know what is this mystery." So then after much humming-and-hahing, he explained all the business *viz.* This grand house and all its sumptuous baggages and assets used to belong to a certain deceased gentleman named Mr. Israel Starogubsky, who was a Jew merchant (especialty diamonds) and suddenly died since about one month owing to heart-rupture. He was an undischarged bankrupt, but all the same he was living in a very costly fashion, so what Han believed (and also told to him by one of Mr. Starogubsky's servants) he must have secret and illicit source of riches. Ergo, he must have his jewels concealed away in his furnitures, etc.

With my well-known sharp acumen I was understanding all this in a twinkle, and so then I and Han preceded to poke and pry all those lots laid out for inspection, but very discreet and tactful I need hardly say, in case anyone else would smell rats. In the end, after indefatigable researches I earmarked for purchase the following items:—One marble statute of Queen Cleopatra toying with an asp in her bosom. This statute was broken on the backside and the hole was mended with plaster. This was clearly a highly suspicious fact, and very likely indicated a secret chamber. Ditto ditto for about five old motor car tyres of rubber, which having been "vulcanized" in numerous places formed a splendid niche or pouch in which gems and jewels might be secretly insinuated.

I also selected some old boots having very thick heels, that looked rather hopeful to me, and two stuffed crocodiles big enough to include all the jewels of world I would think. All these items, and many others too selected by Han, were duly bid for by him, for he was determined to have them, and did so, even however high was the price. Altogether he purchased between

one and two waggon-loads of miscellaneous articles vide above.

While he was causing all these items to be transported outside, and passing some rather sharp words with one Egyptian hammal or porter concerning those crocodiles, I went along at the back of the mansion, where the Government Auctioneer, along with the Official Receiver, were just about to auction late Mr. Starogubsky's pet animals. According to the catalogue there was one exhibit called "Unique and Perfect Specimen of the Australian Emu", and I wished to see same, because I am warmly addicted to the rearing of all sorts of dickie-birds, maintaining regardless of expence one tip-top Aviary of our "feathered friends" in my Ancestral Demesne in Khushdilpur State (eleven separate sorts altogether). So feeling an overpowering whim to gaze upon this rare bird, it was not just low curiosity but keen scientifical interest I need hardly say indeed, and I hadn't a foggiest notion to buy him in the least, for one thing, why, I was a beggarly pauper, so how could I think to bid out for a big and costly bird like that.

When I espied him, I could hardly believe my eyes, thinking it to be an optical delusion or perhaps "mirage", being up to about 5 feet high and as stout as six turkey-fowls I will wager any day, no wings to speak about and in lieu of feathers long sorts of hairs, also round his neck were clusters of bloats (technically called "wattles") pink and blue. One interesting fact of natural history is that these "wattles" change colour when the bird looses its temper and become orange and crimson in lieu. It was simply a marvellous spectacle and, while I was enjoying it to the full, I came into conversation with an awfully nice ornithological and veterinary gentleman named Professor Venizelos, Grecian certainly, but speaking English first-class. From his lips I was informed that "The catalogue is all

wrong. This is no Australian Emu. Why look at that helmet-like exressence on his occiput. This is a genuine Malaccan Cassowary, Mark my Words".

After this we became very chatty, and I was prattling away with great gusto, when suddenly I began to be troubled with hiccoughs. I know very well what was the cause. *viz* a dish of Egyptian Prawn Curry (Kari) I had freely partaken not long since, spiced with red chillies, garlics, tumerics, piccalillis, peppermint essence, and other sorts of saucy condiments, which is a favourite tid-bit of Han, but poison to me, always inducing flatulence and spazms, and very sorry I ate it.

Gradually these hiccoughs increased in frequency and severity until they resounded echoing through that hall, and peoples began to turn round anxiously, enquiring to each other, "What was that." The fact is that Hiccoughs, speaking scientifically, are involuntary one might say Reflex, spazms of the Respiratory and Diaphragmatic Organisms, and you can't stop them, if you do, you will rupture yourself, so you must let them have their way at all costs. But even more vexatious thing was that the Auctioneer wrongly presumed my hiccoughs to be eager bids for that bird, and the more I was seeking to explain that this is just merely hiccoughs, the more so he was accepting my bid at a higher figure (whether in malice or true misapprehension I can't say).

Anyhow in the end the Auctioneer cried "For the third and last time Gentlemen, Going, Going, Gone." He then banged his hammer, and turning to me he announced "The bird, Sir, is yours at £6 Turkish."

Good Heavens, I had never said "Six". All I said was "Hick, Hick." Of course I tried to explain this, how it was all a profound mistake, but again my utterances were choked by further spazms, until the Auctioneer and also the Official Receiver got very shirty and said I must pay-up cash on the nail, no tick,

and remove bird from precincts instanter, if not you will be prosecuted for fraudulent bidding. Think of my situation, I had only £9, and now I must stump up six of them for a mere bird. I rushed along to find Han, but the calous brute had gone off along with his wagons leaving me in an absolute lurch.

I must say Professor Venizelos showed himself a pukka brick-and-trump in my connection, and without his lavish help I should have been totally phlummoxed. He purchased one powerful chain and ditto dog-collar and we firstly tried to transport bird per taximeter automobile, and afterwards by a horsecab. But it was No-Go, that bird would never go in any of them and became violent. You must be careful about these kicks from cassowaries. They are not like ostriches that kick *forwards* and *downwards*. Cassowaries are kicking *sideways* and *upwards* (like bovines such as cows and bulls) which should be born in mind in case you wish to rear them. The Professor Sahib's trowsers (including internal combinations) were absolutely spifflicated from top to bottom and I hereby tender my warm thanks to this public-spirited gentleman, and if he will kindly notify me value of ruined bags etc. I shall be delighted to defray cost of same *i.e.* when happier days intervene, not just now because I havn't got the dibs sorry to say.

By this time a huge crowd of idle wastrels and sightseers were collected in that "Boulevard" as it is called, and police objections re blocking traffic, were pouring in to me (bad luck) so in the end we had to walk ourselves on foot all the way to Han's house,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, while I was going in front holding the bird "in leash", and Professor (including two Egyptian Police Constables) pushing behind which was very kind of him as already intimated, and the journey including interruptions lasted over two hours.

When we reached into Han's dormitory, I left Professor Sahib in the pasage in attendance on my

bird, and went to see Han in the office so as to arrange adequate accommodation. Han was kneeling on the floor very sweaty, and all around him were shreds of broken bust (of Cleopatra) and crocodiles, and motor tyres, slashed all to pieces. Han was cursing and swearing that there were no gems nor jewels in the least, and he has incurred too much expenditures all for nothing. But when we showed him the Malaccan Cassowary he forgot all his own troubles and became transfused with wonder and passion against me and against that poor helpless bird. The fact is Han has no bowels of compassion, what harm would a bird do in his Office. Nil practically, anyhow nothing shall induce me to turn him out into the street, only over my dead body.

The professor has stated in reply to my querries raised that his food should consist of slugs, snails, worms, maggots, beetlies, etc., so I am now just off to see if such items are up for sale in the meat or fish market. If not, very likely I must go into the country and dig for them in earth. Anyhow I am quite determined in common humanity to leave no stone unturned so that my bird's dietary may be the very best that my straightened means will allow, even if I myself go a-hungry. I am like that, I would share my last crust with a poor dumb brute, not that this Cassowary is dumb quite the reverse. He has an awfully powerful note, rich and low, something between drumming and booming. I should also say that his sex has not yet been decided. Professor says he is either female or male, but not sure which. However this fact, so he says, may readily be determined later. As you may guess, there is uproarious excitement in this vicinity, and I am thinking to make an admission charge of two piastres per head to view my Cassowary (babies-in-arms free of course). So may-be all this concatenation of disasterosities is just a blessing in disguise, and time enough too, Good-Heavens Alive.

## EDITH

Dear, Dear, what a funny puzzle Life is to be sure, only last week ago the carking clouds of doom were looming o'er my sorry-pate, and I was fidgeted to absolute botheration how I may keep Wolf from Door, or make my two ends meet (financially). In fact, I was a practical starveling, having petty-cash only 27 piastres, (equals less than Rs. 4, at current rates of exchange) and out of this exiguous pittance I must rear one large and costly Cassowary-Bird as already related, say nothing of foods, cloths, and accidentals for self, why the imagination absolutely boggles at such a beggarly dilemma. Now, to-day, on the opposite hand, you will all be delighted to hear, I am once more in affluent funds, glad to say, in fact quite a pecunious chap and all through my dear bird and my own sharp acumen, and how it all happened kindly peruse as per seq.

In the 1st place kindly recollect yourselves that my Armenian brother-in-law Han (rotten scamp) bought up about 50 maunds of rubbishy items at sale-auction of late Mr. Israel Starogubsky, diamond merchant, because Han's firm notion was that this Jewish gentleman was secretly hiding jems-and-jewels in his furnitures, so as to bilk his creditors, being undischarged bankrupt. So Han purchased all these items such as marble busts, stuffed crocodiles, etc., etc., thinking to discover therein costly treasures and become millionaire in no time. But nothing of the sort, there were no jewelleries in the least, it was all Mares Nests and Moonshine, and Han was fit to cut his neck in two with thwarted lust.

At that same auction I myself was compelled quite against my will and owing to a sudden fit of hiccoughs

to buy up a wonderful sort of female bird belonging to late Mr. Starogubsky, called Cassowary. This bird I have become affectionately addicted to, in fact, now we are just like David and Jonah, and I have settled to call her Edith, being a pretty nomenclature and also having the signification of "A Rich Gift," which indeed, she is, as you will now hear.

As regards this bird, I have spared no pains to spread rays of sunshine into her life, and rear her up to be happy, healthy and wise. Every morn I rise with the lark, toiling and moiling on her behoof, brushing her sable plumages, also gentle massages to the legs. For her also, I have laid down a weekly diet-sheet, such as Monday, Fresh Slugs, Snails and Worms. Tuesday, lizard-meat and red peppers of capsicum, and so on till Sunday when she has some laxative medicine. And so it goes on daily until at night-fall, utterly exhausted, I drop into a stertorous slumber.

But the extraordinary thing is that, in spite of all my sedulous attentions vide above, she is beginning to peak-and-pine in rather a broody mood, tucking her head under her wing and balancing on one leg as though she had altogether lost her interest in life, even squinting at her nice victuals with lack-lustre eye. Of course, I began to grieve deeply anent this sad infliction to my dear pet, consulting at enormous expence the best veterinary brains of all Cairo Municipal Limits especially my new friend Professor Venizelos of the Bab-en-Nasr Veterinary Dispensary.

One night oppressed by these gloomy bodings, I incurred a terrible sleeping "Night-Mare" (*i.e.*, a sort of sonnambulistical chimera, I presume) during which the vision (optical delusion, of course) of the late Mr. Starogubsky appeared before my couch leading the bird Edith by her chain, and shouting out to me, "Why, you poor fool, can't you see what is ailing this

miserable bird? Her belly is full up with my jems-and-jewels, which I used to feed to her at the rate of 8 to 10 per diem. Hah! Hah! Where could you get a safer depository than a living fowl? My creditors would never guess that, could they? Hah! Hah! Hah!"

At this juncture I woke up all in a blue funk and perspiring freely and heart beating Pit-a-pat and Rub-a-Dub. But after I had duly excogitated over this strange dream, it seemed clear to me that it is no less than a Divine Annunciation, *viz.*, that immured in the craw, gizzard, or other intestine guts, of my dear bird there was a vast treasure which Great Almighty in His Inscrutable Wisdom had vouchsafed to me to inherit. After all there is nothing incredible in this. I have read about one cock-ostrich in Aden Dependency which picked and pecked up one black pearl worth two lakhs and had to be amputated by the Residency Surgeon. The fact is these hulking birds will swallow up almost anything and require no encouragement including keys, nails, coins, and minor office requisites such as nib-pens and rubber-erasers as is well-known to all and sundry. So it all fitted in very well, and my heart began to sing with joy and gladness, like a cock-a-hoop.

All the same, it were perhaps, wise to prosecute some corroboratory enquiries first, before taking any drastic or irreparable action. It might be that the dream, in lieu of being a celestial manifestation was just a naughty prank of the Devil. Anyhow I ran off swiftly to my new friend Professor Venizelos taking Edith with me "In leash" and she was so sluggish in her gait that I got quite ratty against her. Professor Sahib was there in the Dispensary, and I exclaimed to him all the business, *viz.*, that I was vouchsafed a celestial communication from On High doubtless, and am consequently pretty sure that Edith's temporary indisposition is due to a vast treasure of rubies, emeralds,

and sapphires, concealed in her internal organisms such as guts, but before adopting surgical or other steps, I should much like Veterinary verification. Pray inform to me my dear Sir how I can best obtain such corroboratory evidence and much obliged.



*At first....insisted to treat me for incipient sun-stroke*

Professor Sahib seemed to be highly surprised at all this, and to my sharp annoyance, would at first have nothing to do with the bird but insisted to treat me for incipient sun-stroke ordering Bromide Mixture and complete rest. But after a time he became satisfied that I had no symptoms of hallucination, and that the whole story was hard fact. So he replied, "Well, of course, you can have the bird X-Rayed which will certainly prove it one way or the other. I will arrange it if you so desire, but it will cost you one or two pounds.

One or two pounds, Fore Sooth! As though a paltry pittance like that could be compared against the life and limb of my dear Edith, say nothing of the stupendous fortune wrapped up in her interior cosmogony. I thought this X-Ray was a splendid notion, and warmly commended Professor Venizelos for his

sagacity, instructing him forthwith and instanter to snap a dozen photos of Edith from every position, *i.e.*, sideways, backwards, upwards, downwards, and if deemed advisable diagonally too, and he said he would certainly.

So wishing him a merry adieu and Ta Ta, I went off in a high rollick and expended all my 37 piastras in a 1st class Blow-out at a nice Grecian Hotel. But of course, all that day I was itching with fuss and fidget about those X-Ray photos, would they show Edith to be internally speckled all over like a plum-pudding, or just an empty blank and void from top to bottom. Actually in the privacy of my secret bosom, I was a dead-cert that she was chock-full of jewelry and I even was planning and plotting on paper how, I could most wisely employ my vast inheritance, not I need hardly say in petty fritters and fal-de-dals, but in wise and lasting benefactions to the human and beastly Races, half to one and half to the other, which I thought only fair play, in view of Edith's considerable share in providing this rich fortune.

So when I hied backwards next morning to that Veterinary Hospital, can you imagine what a frightful shocking I suffered when Professor Sahib informed to me that each and every photo were "purely negative", not a spot or speckle of the least jewellery or "foreign body" to be seen in all Edith's anatomy from head to tail inclusive, not even a seed pearl.

His lamentable words struck on my ears like a death's knell. So this was the grave of all my sanguinary hopes. I stood there bowed in utter anguish and surely none shall condemn me if I shred some manly tears? Professor Sahib I must say treated my pitious grief with awfully nice "tact", standing close by my side and doffing his hat from time to time in kind condolence. In answer to my broken querries raised, he replied that "No, there is no possibility of mistake,

the photos are clarity itself. I grieve deeply my dear Sir, on your keen disappointment, but you may rest assured that your Cassowary-bird is entirely devoid of stones whether precious or the reverse, even such as a minor gall-stone, gravel, and other concretions of calculi. On that I will freely stake my professional reputation." So wringing his hands sadly I was taking my hook "wafting sighs from Indus to the pole".  
(Quotation.)

But everyone who knows me will bear witness doubtless that I am no man to be quashed in the dust by sorrow for long-time, being by nature a perky and vivacious chap certainly. So by the time I was wending back for "Home" (*i.e.*, Han's lodging, 122, Bis, Rue Hodeidah, Cairo City), and even before the salty dribblings from my poor tearducts were dried on my cheeks including nose, I had conceived another splendid notion being purely a figment of my fanciful imagination and my opinion is that hardly anyone but a congenital genius could have thought of it, in the least. My conception was this:—If I, Babu Piche Lal, may believe firmly that Edith the bird is a living repository or receptacle for late Mr. Starogubsky's jelleries, then why shouldn't my bro-in-law Han believe it too? The thing was to implant into his bosom such seeds as would, when nourished by his natural proclivities of greed and covetousness, blossom into a mighty Tree of Desire to obtain my invaluable bird, cost what it may, and hence offer me a whacking price for her. After that he has bought her vide above, (and what's more paid for her) then he must be made to understand that she contains no jellery whatsoever on which I shall buy her back again for a mere song thus turning a pretty penny.

With me to-think is to-act: so when I reached into our lodging I was beginning to say to Han as though in casual chitter-chat that "Good Gracious! What an extraordinary phenomenon it is to be sure! Half

the persons in Cairo City, so it seems, are mad keen to buy my dear Edith the Cassowary-bird. Why, one man who alleged himself to be ex-butler of late Mr. Starogubsky went so far to offer me a bag of gold. Of course I couldn't think of it, I love her too dearly. But can you understand it? To me it all seems very mysterious."

I could see as plain, as plain, that this intimation was very surprising and exciting to Han, firstly, flushing rosy-red, then blenching lily-white alternatively, then opening his mouth as though to propound a lot of querries to me, then shutting it up again and knitting his brow in profound reveries and "brown studies." In short, to employ piscatorial metaphores my fish was already nibbling at the hook.

So then I cried gaily, "Well, Well, my dear fellow, I shall now go off for a nice pedestrian santer so as to inhale the fresh airs and will be back after an hour or two, so Ta Ta for the nonce. So will you kindly attend to my dear Edith and oblige." But as you may well guess I did not indulge any sort of idle sanctrs. but ran along swiftly to a certain Egyptian bazar letter-writer (*khattnavis* as we say) and, urging him to hasty expedition, caused him to write a letter to self, *i.e.*, Piche Lal Effendi being an honorific title commonly assigned to those of high birth and illustrious attainments whether Egyptians or Unegyptians.

It was a long letter and was purporting to be indited by the Ex-Bird-Keeper of late Mr. Starogubsky, deceased. I did not know what this person's name might be, so I signed as "Sidi Barkat, Somali", which seemed a suitable designation. The *matlab* of the letter was that the secret depository of all Mr. Starogubsky's jewellery was no less than my Edith the Cassowary Bird as already adumbrated above. Also a list of the jewels was appended, *viz.*, E. G. 23 diamond-stones "of purest ray serene" total 73 carats, Prime Pigeon's Blood Rubies 16, Total 36 carats, etc., etc., etc. I also caused Sidi

Barkat to state that he did not ask to share these jewellries, he freely recognised them to be my property, so he would leave the matter of his reward for disclosing this invaluable secret to my well-known generosity. The letter terminated with the usual imprecations for your Honour's Longevity and Prosperous Career.

Now I daresay some arm-chair critics and smart-chaps may say to this "Good Heavens Alive, what are you up to now? What is the use to write a letter to yourself in this idiotical fashion? Are you not showing yourself to be rather a tom-fool and Silly Jackanapes?" To these and others of their kidney I would reply, "Sucks to You." I know my brother-in-law Han inside and outside. He is the most nefarious Eve's Dropper extant, always poking his nose into other people's concerns without their permission. When that letter should arrive, I know very well what Han would do, *viz.*, steam the gum of the cover over a tin-pan of hot water and peruse the contents.

That was absolutely cock-sure, but to make assurance doubly sure, I made the *Khatt Navis* to endorse on the cover *SECRET. STRICTLY PERSONAL. ONLY TO BE OPENED BY ADDRESSEE.* So having finished the letter I signed it to represent Sidi Barkat's left thumb impression, using I need hardly say, not my own left thumb but the pointed end of my elbow, which if adroitly affixed is quite indetectible, and I can confidently recommend in similar cases.

After that the pregnant letter was delivered by the *Khatt-Navis* is person. According to my instructions he went along the passage of Han's apartment crying out loudly for Piche Lal Effendi. On which a spotty-faced gentleman donning a green "Homburg" hat with cocks feathers, also a fashionable golf-shooting-suit with pink spats came outside (this was Han, of course), and having peeped and pried at the letter this way and that, said he will take it for me. Han also asked

to the *Khatt-Nawis*, who was the writer of the letter and latter replied (again according to my orders) that he was a large stout Somali-fellow with a greasy fez-cap and a cotton djibbah or Arabian night-shirt having the appearance of a bird-fancier.

After the *Khatt-Nawis* had returned back to me and duly reported all this, and received warm thanks and a handsome honorarium, I waited for 15 minutes so as to give Han liesure to do his dirty work and then retired backwards to our mutual lodging. I was not the least surprised to see that Han was intimately hobnobbing with Edith, chirrupping to her lovingly, and patting her rump with warm affection, also baiting her some tasty snacks. Never before had he done such things, to the contrary always treating my dear bird with gross insolence and complaining of her indiscretions in the office.

When Han turned back and espied me standing there he uttered a gay laugh (Faugh! What a canting Humbugger!) "Hullo Lal, now you have surprised my little secret. How fond I am of your dear bird. She has quite won my heart by her endearing tricks. At first, I was rather shy against her but now I doat on her awfully keenly. You really must allow me to buy her. I would give anything to have her for my very own pet."

Did you ever hear such a Bamboozling Cockatrice and Judas Iscariot? Such gammon and bunkum made me absolutely nauseous. But of course, I had to prevaricate my features and manerisms so as to pretend that I believed every lying word of his to be Gospel Truth, and smiling and smirking as though delighted with his fulsome complements to my feathered pet. As for selling her, I replied, "No, no, my dear chap, I couldn't sell my Edith. She is my apple of Eye and an A.1 bird, how could I bear to sell her even to my own brother? No, no, ask me anything but this. Mammon

and Filthy Lucre are nothing to me when weighed in the scales against Love."

Altogether the business of higgling and haggling about Edith lasted  $1\frac{3}{4}$  hours, and in the end I received £6 pounds down, and also return of my IOU for £10 (cum compound interest at 48 per centum).

Even then I had to be very careful, for Han tried to fob off two bogus banknotes, but of course, I am too old a bird to be snared by such chaff as that. After it was all over and done with, I remarked to Han as though by an aftermath, "Oh Bye-the-Bye Han, I was almost forgetting to give you Edith's X-Ray photos. Now that she is your pet, you would like to keep them for a nice momento doubtless. I myself had a silly dream she contained in her crop or craw a store of precious jewels, so just to make my mind at ease I caused Professor Venizelos of the Veterinary Hospital to snap her (X-Ray) in 12 different postures. Here are the photos and also his written report. You will see that her anatomy is quite free from "Foreign Bodies" glad to say, and absolutely hale and hearty, which will be a great relief to you, no doubt."

You should have seen Han's face as he listened these fateful words, it was like a devilish Satan (alias the Arch-Fiend, Old Nick, etc.), when Jehovah turned him out from Paradise. For seven minutes by the clock he was cursing hideous oaths against me and Professor Venizelos and Mr. Starogubksy say nothing of the poor dumb bird herself. Then went off in a tearing temper to verify again from Professor Venizelos, and doubtless the latter gentleman did the needful, because Han never came back till 3 o'clock next morning in a state of absolute tipsification and hiccoughing exhalations of beers, wines and spirits, and he is now lying in a cataleptic seizure on the landing. When he wakes up I shall offer him five pounds cash down for Edith, and you may be cock-sure he will take it, for he will never get a better offer from anybody here, that is a dead cert.

## ADMIRAL'S NUISANCES

As is well known doubtless to all-and-sundry, I am quite on terms of familiar hobnobbery with so many Big-Pots, Great-Guns, Social Lions, etc. In this connection it would not be out of place to mention that my visiting-list concludes two Additional Judicial Commissioners; Agent to the Governor-General-in-Council (one); Maharajahs and Ruling Princes (eight or nine easily); Suffragon Bishops and Rural Deans (one of each); Major-Generals, two (including a severe reprimand which was one of the unjuestest sentences in the whole of Military History); I have taken tea with a Dowager-Duchess (Her Grace of Bridlington) and with the Ex-President of the All-India Varnashram Dharma Swarajya Sangh. But, so far, I have not had the pleasure of any Social Intercourses worth mentioning along with high Officers of H. B. M. Royal Navy Department, who have never yet, as one may say, swum into my ken.

The other day, while continuing to reside in Cairo Urban Limits, as already informed to your good readers, I was observing not without interest, that quite adjacent to the vicinage of my own domiciliary habitation, there was a fine mansion surrounded by a nice "park" or perhaps "pleasaunce" would be a better word, and the superscription on the Portal was "Trafalgar House". "Sir Harry Brackenbury K.C.M.G. Royal Navy (Retired)." So I was all of a mind to pay a social call to this gentleman, and have a nice chitterchat anent navel affairs in general, and in special our dear Indian Marine, with such a knowing "Old Salt." But my Armenian brother-in-law Han (full name Mister Hovhannes Tokatlian) said No. This marine admiral is credibly alleged to be a very angry fellow and an utter misanthrope

towards all members of the Human Race. All his love, if you can call it love, is lavished on vegetables and analogous horticultural products, which pass-time he pursues with unrelenting passion, day-in, night-out. So he is mad about trespasses and encroachings from comparative strangers among his busheries and green swards which are his very apple of eye. So take heed my dear chap and beware of yourself for if you venture to rupture his privacy he will very likely commit a bad nuisance against you."

Of course these silly observations of Han rather nettled my dander and umbrage, and I replied pretty tartly "Bosh to all that! I am not like you, a mere Armenian nobody, but an A. 1 Publicist and Literary Criterion. I have not the slightest qualms that the Admiral Sahib will be delighted to welcome, as his honoured guest, one who is perhaps, equally eminent in the Realm-of-letters as he may be in the Field-of-Mars and Neptune, and very likely more so. So kindly shut up." But for once in my life, as I will freely admit, my prognostic was totally erroneous, Han was quite right, Sir Harry Brackenbury was far worse Ogre and Fee-Faw-Fum even than he said, as will be clearly adumbrated in succeeding paras hereto appended (q.v.) Mind you, I am not passing strictures on all Admirals as a class, some may be very nice Officers, as I daresay and can quite believe, and others not so nice or even nasty.

The way I met this Admiral was rather funny, the introductory medium strange to say was my pet bird Edith, the Malaccan Cassowary, concerning whom I have already penned some very absorbing and erudite Essays (Back Numbers obtainable at As. 6 excluding postage). The first thing was that my dear Edith, to high delights of everyone, began to hatch up eggs in rapid succession, of enormous size and rather like a football ("Rugger" ball, of course, not "Soccer").

According to the dictates of my new friend, Professor Venizelos of the Bab-en-Nasr Veterinary Hospital, once a true cassowary begins to emit these eggs, she will continue to do so up to about 3 or 4 dozen eggs approx, which speaking scientifically, is then called a "clutch", and The Mother-Bird will then sit upon her clutch, and therefrom breed out and rear young Cassowary-chicks (of course). As to this I was naturally all of a cock-a-hoop, rubbing my hands in glee and capers, that I should very likely sell these callow offsprings at a pretty penny, being Rara Avis and fine curios.

But the trouble re. female Malaccan Cassowaries is this. Being, as I surmise, wild jungle-fowls, they do not much like to lay eggs into civilised quarters and purlieus, but are fain to seek the recesses of the impenetrable forest and there secretly give birth to their broods in comparative privacy. As to this, say I, All honour to them, it shows a very nice sense of bashfulness and prudery that is not often encountered among the Aves (birds) and Fowls, more's the pity. Anyhow, in the beginning, all these ornithological statistics were quite unknown to me and also even to Professor Venizelos, and the fact was only brought to our notice by the mysterious elapsation of three concurrent days during which not a single egg was laid down by Edith. Of course this caused us acute perturbation, until we discovered that she had absconded out by night as far as the Ezbekia Public Gardens, and there having with beak and claws torn down and eradicated two herbaceous border "beds" and some floriferous shrubberies, built a whopping nest out of the resultant sprigs, twigs, buds, blossoms, and branches, and in this nest she laid down two eggs. Very lucky the pukka Conservator of these gardens was absent at that very time (taken sick with carbuncles I believe) or I might have incurred some disagreeable tiffs with him re damage done in his garden. As it was, I was obliged to stump-up 12 piastres

bakhshish to the head Baghban (as we say mali) before I could obtain my two eggs back again.

So after this, as you may well guess I was keeping watch-and-ward over my Edith with superhuman vigilancies. Nevertheless about three nights later on, in spite of all my loving care as a foster-parent, she once again succeeded to elude away somehow or otherhow, and at morning's dawn I found she was lost and gone!!! What a to-do and botheration I shall never forget. I rushed off to Professor Venizelos, and when he came back with me we both began to track her along by her toe-marks imprinted clearly in the sand and dry-dust, and to our wonderment they led us to a thick cactus hedging surrounding "Trafalgar House," and there it was quite clear that Edith had forced her ingress through that hedging, quite careless of pricks and prods, such as are very sharp on these cactus-vegetables, and entered into the Admiralty Garden.

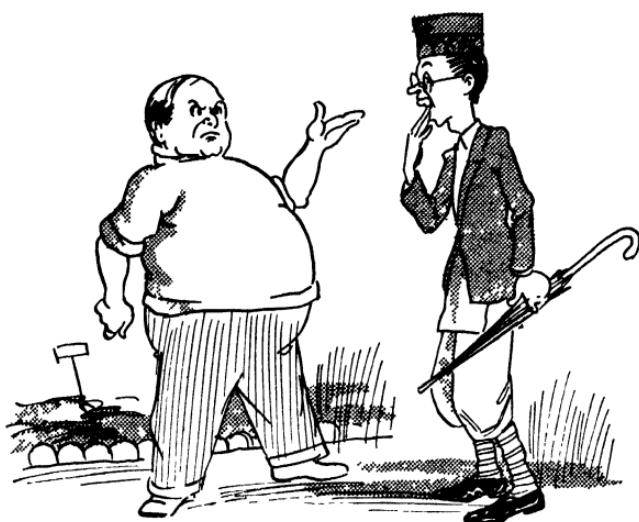
It was clearly only thing to do viz to enter myself at the proper portal (front Door) and politely request for my egg which doubtless Edith had laid there. Professor Sahib (rather a cowardly custard if truth must out) was all against this, alleging that "Let well alone. What is one egg among so many? The Admiral is by repute a very choleric gentleman, and very likely on your demand for eggs he may do a mischief with you. For God's sake let him preserve the egg to himself, or eggs as the case may be."

Naturally such sorry counsels of Blue Funk were utterly repugnant to me, and I pointed out to him pretty sharp that we Old Soldiers of the Great War such as myself (with three and seven-twelfths years Service overseas, Indian Expeditionary Force D, Commissariat Dept) were no mere milk-sops afraid to say Boh to a goose or even Admiral. We should sooner die than wave the white-flag of surrender or even show a white feather like cravens and poltroons. Our Mottos were

to grasp the nettles boldly, to beard lions in dens, to bell the cat and similar deeds of derring-do; not just to quail away like a Jerry Sneak or Bob Acres. Fie, and For Shame to you Sir, for your piddling pusillanimity."

So Professor Sahib became bashful by this resounding rebuke, and exuded away to his dispensary saying he would take no hand in the business. I myself went quite devil-may-care alongside that Cactus Hedging towards the front gate. I remember now there was some great commotion occurring in the garden, but at the time I thought nothing. When I reached to the Mansion's steps of Porch, I sounded the electrical bell crying "Koi Hai" according to the dictates of polite Society Etiquette. But no menial servant came to open me as is customary, rang I never so much, and it seemed to me that everyone was in the garden whence came a loud row as of a pukka hallabaloo, and vistas of rushing Egyptian men among the busheries. Clearly some great work was in course of progress and it seemed to me that the Admiral had decided to pull up all the landscape and renew it in some different fashion, flowers down and roots up, holes here and mounds there, and everything topsy-turvey. The only things appearing to be in tact were three little sticks in the ground bearing tin labels, and feeling rather anxious I went up to read them. The first was inscribed *Areca Madagascarensis* and the second was *Echinopsis Brackenburii*, and I was just about to peruse the 3rd, when I heard a loud shout of "Hi".

I turned round and espied one short but very thick person wearing khaki slacks and a dirty sweater. As he came nearer I saw his face to be blood-red in colour and his nose appeared to have suffered some deformation sideways. I quite naturally presumed this individual to be some old jack-tar, such as Admiral's "batman", for he had no insignia of rank such as



*To what, Sir, are we indebted for the pleasure of this visit*

epaulettes, telescopes, navel hat, etc. He said "And to what, Sir, are we indebted for the pleasure of this visit at this unearthly hour of the morning?"

I replied that I am a Bird-Fancier and wish to converse with Admiral Sir H. Brackenbury K.C.M.G. on a certain private business connected with bird's eggs. He said "I am Admiral Brackenbury." And then, as if under the stress of some violent emotion, repeated "BIRDS EGGS! What do you mean, Sir?" So then I explained to him all about my dear Edith, and her habit to drop eggs here, there, and elsewhere, but especially in the recesses of forests and gardens. I also informed to him that in this connection kindly note that the rights of poultry-keepers had been most clearly defined by Act of Parliament. If any domestical fowl may lay an egg or eggs upon lands other than those of the bird-master, then such an egg may be claimed by him at law being his indefeasible property inherrent in his ownership of said bird, the burden of proof of ownership of course resting on him.

On which (you will hardly believe it) he sprang straightly at my throat uttering bellows and snarls like a mad bull. But since his mannerisms and facial grimaces for a long time had been highly suspicious, and since I was by long experience versed in the tempers and tantrums of British Officers, I began to smell rats and take prudent measures of "Defence not Defiance." What a providential fact it is that I am so athletically inclined, for springing over a petty handcart called "wheel-barrow" that was just behind me, and then round some busheries of the laburnum sort, I was off and away by leaps and bounds right over the wall at the end of "Kitchen-Garden".

As I did so I espied my dear Edith running swiftly hither and fro among the flower-beds pursued by four Egyptian Fellaheen, (as we say coolies) pelting upon her sticks, clods, and other missiles. Of course my heart bled for her, but my own danger (as a married man with brats and bairns depending from me) was too terrible, so nothing could be done just then to rescue my darling pet. So I was just inhaling breaths and thanking my lucky stars at my merciful delivery from almost certain death (including mutilation) when to my amazement over that wall there jumped that furious Admiral and once again rushed down upon me pell-mell and hurley-burley.

To tell all about that stern chase, including my agile doublings and jerkings and jinkings, would take about 40 pages of foolscap (single spacing). With help of "Atlas of Cairo" I have subsequently traced out exactly which route we traversed: viz Boulevard Ismail, then along Sharia Sesostris, follow tram-lines to Place Atabeh, turn left at Shell Petrol Station, down the Muski Bazar into a billiard-game-saloon, and out at the back-side, thought I had escaped the Admiral here, but No, there he was, in a gruelling race through Sharia El Mahdi, and Suk El Khattab, and back into Muski.

Tripped across a blind beggar here, but by Grace of Almighty so did Admiral, and mistook beggar for me vouchsafing him a frightful drubbing. After this, three or four times round a sort of Chiboutra selling newspapers and postcards (called Kiosk) where I tried to inform Police Sergeant (called Arif) of my terrible plight, but couldn't remember the Arabic for Murder, so had to go on full speed to Bab El Bahari, across the Kasr-El-Nil Bridge, lost my hat here, and one motor lorry behind me ran down and collided over the Admiral's body, but he didn't care and was up again in half a twinkling, into the Polo Pavilion Gezira, and out by the Gent's Lavatories and so back again to Bank of Nile River.

Of course by this time I simply couldn't inhale my pants whatsoever, indeed am not sure that my lungs, lights, diaphragm, etc., are recovered rightly even now. But all sounds of pursuit had died into a blessed stillness, and I was just about to kneel down and pray a holy prayer of gratitude, when there was a howl like a ravening Bengal Tiger and once again I beheld the terrific face of my relentless pursuer. I had only time to rise upon my feet, no more, when he aimed at my heart the most dastardly kick I ever saw in my life, surely a very questionable blow, I venture to say, for an Officer of his seniority, and distinctly anti-British. Anyhow the force of that kick wafted me absolutely over that bank into the serging flood of Nile River.

Just think of my predicament amid the midst of deadly currants and whirlpools, say nothing of submerged rocks, crocodiles, hyppopotami, etc., etc. But even then I never lost my presence of mind, while I was turning over and over in the atmosphere I saw clearly that the Admiral's kick had been so stupendous, that not only it blew off his boot, and also overbalanced him into the Nilotic Flood, so there we were both splashing and gasping together at Death's Door.

You will never guess what happened in the end. I and Sir Harry Brackenbury were both rescued alive by an Egyptian boat-wala who was culling reeds by chance, and a large crowd coagulated and began to inaugurate our artificial perspiration.

Among these kindly Samaritans and Fairy-Godmothers I must specifically tender a warm meed of thanks to a young journalistical fellow, who as soon as I had recovered my Sub-conscious Ego, insisted me to tell him the whole story with exclusive serial rights for his paper, as we say a "scoop." Now many men would have said plump and plain "This British Admiral tried to assassinate me, and no bones about it." But no, I said nothing of the sort or kind. I replied with almost inhuman magnanimity that the Admiral had a fit on the Bank (either epileptic or apoplectic I couldn't say) and I felt it my bounden duty to do what I could to preserve a (presumptuously) valuable human life. In this however I deserved no credit, and prefer to remain quite anonymous and incognito.

Now all this was quite true to a good extent. I never said I rescued the Admiral, though very likely in my watery struggles I may by instinct have helped him to keep his head above water and reach a safe haven. In fact I think this is very likely, and could be assumed as a matter of course. Anyhow that is what that young Journalist took it to be, and I confess freely when I saw the article in the Journal I was surprised myself at my brave heroism. The title or Head Lines of the Article was: *Narrow Escape From Watery Grave. Gallant Indian Gentleman Rescues Drowning Admiral.*

I daresay this story will cause a deep throb of pride and joy at one of her sons to surge up in every patriotical bosom in India, male or female, high or low. The journalist says I ought certainly to receive the Royal Albert Medal for brave behaviour in Life-Saving, and

I am prosecuting keen enquiries whether I should apply for this medal or what, and if so who to. So very likely out of evil good may come after all. I see the Medal ribband is either blue (for bravery at sea) or Crimson (for bravery ashore) so presumptuously mine would be blue.

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## ASSISTANT TO SWORD- SWALLOWER

Such epoch-making startles have lately been transpiring to me in the interim that you will all be aghast and agog, it is like just a Faerie-Tale only more so. On the 28th ult. I was idly perusing the columns of the *Egyptian Monitor*, the while bemoaning lugubriously anent my family members and nears-and-dears sundered off from me by cruel Spite-of-Fate such as :—Where, Oh where can they be? God Wot! Are they keeping their healths robust and O.K.? Or on the opposite hand are they perhaps preys to all sorts of insalubrious distempers and contagions, whether epi- or en-demic? Then what also about their economic situation? How (how indeed) can they presently be able to make their 2 ends meet in these lean times without the protective arms of their loving master? Perhaps even, like Church mice, they may be begging breads and meats from door to door.

These and other tender lucubrations were flickering through my cerebral self-consciousness (pericranium) when suddenly my gaze became fastly fixed upon the following notice or advert. in the Agony Column *Egyptian Monitor*, certified true copy hereto appended :—

£20. REWARD. Above sum will be paid for information leading to the discovery of the person described hereunder, viz., Indian Babu, aged about 36, dark complexion, features sharp and peaky, skull asymmetrical, ears large and prominent, physique rather stunted, tendency to knock-knees and splay feet. Short-sighted and habitually wears sun-glasses. Speaks English volubly but inaccurately and

*with a strong Bombay accent. Believed to be somewhere in Egypt. . . . .*

I was highly bewildered to read all these rigger-maroles. So it seemed that there are *two* Indian Babus lost in Egypt Country, to wit my own self, and A.N. Other. What a strangely peculiar concatenation of cirlcs. to be sure. And I began to bother myself that who in the Dickens and Deuce this other chap would be, was he may be one of my vast circle of Acquaintanceship or just a mere Outsider? So I began to read on again with keen alacrity, as per seq. :—

*. . . . . Last seen in Port Said near the Municipal Fish Market wearing Black Hindu Cap, maroon-coloured Cricket Blazer, white muslin dhoti, patent leather pimps, and carrying an umbrella of which the handle bears a representation of Vishnu sitting on a lotus. . . . .*

When I perused these pregnant words, I nearly jumped into air, and my poor heart declined to do its business (of pumping) because the sartorial togs specified above were the very exact ones I was myself donning at that time, and still am donning to this day. So with eye-balls goggling out of their sockets and heart going Rub-a-Dub I was reading along onwards, and there printed in black on white, as plain as plain, was the name of this mysterious Egyptian truant, viz., *Self, Babu Piche Lal, (Alleged) B.A. resident of Shiv Lodge, Khushdilpur City. Indian Papers Please Copy.* And it went on to say that the reward specified will be paid by H. B. H. Consul, Alassio City, Italy, at the representation of the missing Man's grief-stricken wife and friends, being also in that vicinity, (Alassio).

I don't think I am often a victim of angry choler, tiffs, tantrums, huffs, etc. Quite the reverse. Why I am a most blythe and sunny chap and winsome to a fault. You may say that blandness and benignancy are the mainsprings of my nature. Indeed, I am slow to chide and swift to bless. Rage and Rath I eschew

utterly, for I am a keen devotee of our Hindu doctrine of *Gnana Marga* (The Way of True Knowledge), also *Raja Yoga* (Union by Will). But there are some things that are Quite beyond the pale, unforgiveable and unforgettable, and when I re-perused all these monsterous falsifications of my mental and physical corollaries, I became quite besides myself in a towering passion, not only venting some pretty strong oathes (pardonable surely in such gravest provocation) but also kicked my second-best ftn. pen summarily and incontinently out of the window, nib crossed now, and screw-cap entirely spifflicated, I was so jolly angry. Of course the whole thing is no less than a downright whacking fib, from beginning to end, and so utterly contemptuous as to call for no refutation on my part whatsoever. So I shall just ignore such silly Fudge and Tommy-Rot in the limbo of ignominious oblivion to which it amply deserves.

To start with, I deny catagoridly that I am dark-complexioned in the very smallest degree, but fair and comely on the contrary hand. Admittedly I am not Albino, with pink eyes and yellow hairs, God Forbid, and Heaven Forfend! Besides, all handsome men are slightly bronzed, as is universally recognised in the Advert. Columns of the Public Press and elsewhere. If interrogated, I should personally classify my complexionary hue to be *Wheat-coloured* or say a rich tasty *Brunette*, certainly no more than that. And it would be not-out-of-place to make mention that scores (nay centuries) of my friends and chums are admiring it so muchly (complexion) that many times they are asking and asking to me that Whatever cosmetics are you smearing, so as to have such a blooming face as that? To which warm economiuns I always reply, smirking heartily, "Oho! do not mention it. You are flattering me too much. My complexion is purely natural. Nothing whatever is treated to my exterior of face

except warm water and soap." (latter at 2 as. per tablet, Swadeshi Brand Vizagapatam).

Secondly, what about these footling allegations re: "Stunted Physic", "Asymmetrical Scull," "Splay Feet", and all that utter Bosh of the Thing? In any case, what exactly is "Splay Feet"? I have never even heard of such a deformation, and I would dare to aver without much fear of contradiction that this scurilous lampooner, this Benjamin Backbite, with his poisoned pen, hasn't even a foggy notion what it means, but just spinning out words at a random. Let me tell him re: Sculls, Crania, etc. that I have had my phrenological bumps fingered on innumerable occasions by highly competent and artful Professors, of which the vast majority have specifically commented upon the intrinsic beauty of my head (Caput) and averred enthusiastically that it is a real pleasure to take it in hand. So that slander is scotched pretty quick.

It is obviously quite supererogatory and perfectly ridiculous to refer, even indicently, to the low taunts anent my oral conversion of English language. On that score my record is there for all the world to see and hear. And what pray, I would pertinently enquire is this "Bombay Accent"? For Sooth! I am personally residing in Bombay (both Mofussil and Urban Limits) during various Eras and Epochs, now and then, and it is very funny I haven't even heard tell of this "Bombay Accent." Anyhow I am totally nauseous of the whole silly caboodle, so will the great Indian Publics kindly take early steps to contradict plump and plain all or any of these calumniatory innuendos, provided that they have been copied into Indian papers as adumbrated in the Advert. of the *Egyptian Monitor*. Believe me, the whole thing is a pack of arrant taradiddles, goodness alone knows who the author may be. From internal evidence, this precious effusion is certainly not the verbiage of my

dear wife and consort Pipi. Still less it is that of Mr. Cocky Lemon who is well-nigh to an illiterate. As for the worthy Doctor Sahib, he has I quite believe a very fair curriculum of Sanskrit and Hindi, but in English composition whether prosaic or poetic he is a pure booby, recking naught about either Punctuation, Spelling, nor Syntactical Analysis.

I shall now gladly turn myself to happier and sweeter themes, viz. my awfully felicitous re-unification once again along with my dear wife and my two old boon-chums Mr. C. Lemon and the Doctor Sahib. Of course all this longtime I surmized them to be in England, but no, it is clear they have been tarried in Italy. So directly as I was apprehensive of that fact by means of the *Egyptian Monitor* (see above) I rushed along pell-mell and hurley-burley so as to book up Marine Tickets per Messageries Maritimes Steamer Navigation Coy. Ltd., not only for self, also for Edith the Cassowary-Bird and for one Cassowary Chick of hers called Dick, who is a very precocious and promising Youngster. The fact is these charming and sagacious birds have wound themselves inperceptably round my heart, like, as one may say, the Twining Ivy on the Towering Oak. The fact is that man (woman too) is a naturally gregarious chap and he must have Love, Affection, Amour, Passion, Eriticism, call it what you will. If through no fault of his own (bad luck pure and simple) he is forcibly abstained from wifely or analogous communion then he must seek it elsewhere, such as pet dickie-birds or other beastly creatures. We read for instance that the (late) Robert Bruce doated on spiders and roaches while in captivity. And John Milton, I believe, (or it may have been John Bunyan) was warmly addicted to worms. All this I can readily understand. Indeed all the world over and over such facts are freely recognised by philosophists, psycho-analysts, and metaspherical gentlemen of various denominations.

Anyhow, after three or two days navigation over the bounding billows of Mediterranean Ocean, (consult a good Atlas-Map if you are hazy about these regions) I reached into the Marine Harbour of Genoa City, Italy, at 5-30 a.m. punct. in conjunction with my twain birdies. After that, proceeded per Rly. System to Alassio City where having teastered Edith and Dick into the Gents Cloke Room (passed some rather sharp words with the booking-clerk here) and then went scudding off to the Office of British Consulate.

The Consul here is Mr. Fauntleroy and really I found him to be a spanking old Josser, highly amiable and gentlemanly to a degree, and I gladly take this opportunity of bringing to the notice of his officious superiors that I have conceived a very warm opinion of his prudence, keen penetration, merciful humanity to strangers, office organisation, and topping behaviours. I am convinced that if any promotion is "on the mat," *e.g.*, sic. Ambassador, or Minister Extraordinary-Plenipotentiary, etc., etc., the Powers-that-be should be well to consider Mr. Fauntleroy. His full nomenclature is Mr. Bertram Aloysius Fauntleroy Esquire. Verb. Sap., and I sincerely trust something will be done about it. (English papers please copy.)

This Mr. Fauntleroy told to me that the drafting of that Advert. to which I have already animadverted in pretty scathing terms was never any production of his pen, but must have been indicted by some heedless under-strapper or interficious jack-in-office, and he (Mr. Fauntleroy) agreed freely that now that he had clapt eyes on the original (*i.e.*, me) he stood dumbfounded at the crass ineptitude of his deplorable subordinate, which would cause him (Mr. Fauntleroy) many sleepless nights of remorse and shame, say nothing of a smart wiggling to the author of these scurrilities.

So of course after this handsome retraction, I forgave him freely, and then being hardly able to contain my eagerness and fond anxieties I poured forth perfect cataracts of querries and interrogatories anent my loved ones. Where were they? How were they? Why were they in Italy? What doing, and how living? Etc., etc. Also was there perchance any smack of scandal between my dear Consort and Dr. Hatu Ram for I wouldn't trust the worthy Doctor all together. In some aspects he is rather a sly fish. Also what news, re: our joint children Hagop and Bogos, say nothing of our twin girlies relegated in the bosom of Mother-in-Law in Khushdilpur State?

To all these and cognate querries Mr. Fauntleroy responded that he was delighted to reassure me all O.K., and your wife the Armenian lady and also your two masculine friends are even now sojourning quite adjacently only half a mile far, but they are not abiding in a house or an hotel (as one should expect) but in some *caravans*.

“Caravans”? I ejaculated, “How do you mean Caravans? This is a word of Asiatical origin, meaning to say a company of merchants, pilgrims, sutlers, etc., bounded together, and riding upon camels so as to traverse deserts, etc. Then kindly elucidate yourself, my dear Sir and oblige, for to me you are an absolute enigma.” So then Mr. Fauntleroy was explaining that “Caravans” in European Etymology means to say petty houses on wheels, *i.e.*, sorts of residential wagons, and that my loved ones had purchased three or four of these sorts of “Caravans” from some jugglers and jypses and were become proprietors of a peripatetical Circus! Ye Gods and Ye Fish, this was a staggering communication to me, so I was all at-sixes or even sevens to make heads or tails of it in the least. However, resolving to clarify this turgid situation at an early juncture, I was eliciting full directions, re:

location of those Caravans, so I went off helter-squelter once again.

I was almost forgetting to say that I never got the £ 20 reward, despite weighty arguments adduced by me, Mr. Fauntleroy returned a flat Non-Possomous, advancing the thesis (rather a sophistry surely) that no man can legally be said to lay information re: his own whereabouts (Why Not?) and anyhow before disbursing the reward he must refer the case to his client, Madame Piche Lal, being the depositor of the money. Of course it was not an opportune juncture to bandy lengthy chitterchat with a comparative stranger, so wishing Mr. Fauntleroy Good-day and Tata, also Thanks Awfully for kind Goodness, etc. I scudded off on the wings of the wind, my heart beating high with sanguine hope and singing out aloudly some blythe snatches from our Grand Old Vedic Hymns, suited to the occasion.

I must say when I arrived to the address adumbrated by Mr. Fauntleroy at the back of Rly. Stn. I became uneasy because it was rather a stinking locality including two dead cats, broken bottles, horse manures, and analogous garbages. Indeed the municipal sanitation seemed positively defective thereabout. Perhaps Signor Benito Mussolini will kindly take a hint and do the needful. Anyhow there were four caravans certainly, painted red, blue, green, pink, gold, and as I stood there musing darkly, a woman (or rather lady) of voluptuous charms tripped down the ladder of one of those caravans, rushed directly upon me, and venting a strident cry implanted on my phyz about two score resounding kisses, or perhaps "busses" would be a better word. Can you guess who this lady was? It was my darling consort Pipi. . . . It would be an act of gross indelicacy to narrate even cursorily all those rosy rhapsodies and intimate dalliance between two twin-souls thus sundered apart during such a long

epoch, so I shall merely say that I was quite tongue-bound and mumchance by joy, a very rare phenomenon with me, so it shows how poignant my reactionary emotions and ebullitions were, doesn't it?

Soon after out came Mr. Cocky Lemon, dressed in a costume of marvellous cloths (Wild-West Cowboy so he said) and last of all our old Doctor Sahib, fatter than ever and clearly just aroused from heavy slumber (cotton singlet and knicks of khaki doosootie). So there we all were dancing aroundly, in a sort of merry-jig or fandango and fondly kissing each other and *vice versa*, all except Mr. C. Lemon, who was disapproving of kissing as against man to man and confined his activities to handshakes and jolly thumps on hind-quarters. Hey Dey, what a lovely party we had, the scene will be printed indelibly on my tablets of memory to be conjured up fondly in my mind's eye as occasion demands.

And now I must interpolate some interjections anent this mysterious business of Circus, which is still entailing me no small meed of anxious disquietude. Why, in the name of Gracious Goodness, will 3 persons, having no more earthly notion of the art of Circussing than a mere Tom-Noddy, suddenly adopt this notoriously low career of barn-stormers and vagabonding mummers? And who precisely was the concepter (or conceptress?) of this highly imprudent leap-in-the-dark, say nothing of pig-in-the-poke? To these and other cognate and searching interrogatories no satisfactory responses were ever elicited, all I could find was Mr. C. Lemon was certainly the principal culprit, and all the rotten excuse he could proffer was that:—Firstly a certain Circus went bust, *i.e.* bankrupted, in Alassio Town, including one Indian Sword-Swallower, one Turkish Acrobatical tumbler, two trick-cyclists nationality unknown, and one Chinese Midget (female), and had to sell up all their assets at a

mere song, including three lion-cages, one powerful steam organ for discoursing musical airs, and other costly items.

So Mr. C. Lemon said the chance was too good to be missed, especially since his Aunt on his Mother's side was united in the bonds of Holy Matrimony along with a famous clown of Circus called Gringo, and so he (Mr. C. Lemon) knew all about it. Did you ever hear such a footling clap-trap and hollow plea? Besides, what made me even the more shirty was that it was not Mr. C. Lemon's pelf this rashly squandered and spendthrifted but my own indefeasible property, to which he hadn't the foggiest shadow of right. Personally, I fully anticipate a financial disaster of the 1st magnitude and a thumping deficit. The fact is there is no *System*, no *Business Method*, it is all just a happy Hazard. For instance, when I called for the Minutes of the last Meeting, the reply was *there were no Minutes!* When I demand the last Audited Balance Sheet and current Profit and Loss Account. *Ditto Ditto Ditto!!!!*

Howsoever, the evil was done now willy-nilly, so I just put my level best face on a bad business exclaiming that "Alright, since you have got yourselves into this nasty pickle, I will gladly accord you my full measure of support. But remember if I am going to take up Managing Director, I must have explicit obedience to my slightest whim."

Then what was my incredible amazement to hear that, by universal consent, Pipi was already elected Manageress and Supreme Boss, on the score of her fine presence, loud voice, and commanding personality. Comment is hardly superfluous I think. In fact, this precious Triumvirate have already fixed everything. Mr. C. Lemon is appointed Ring-Master and Equestrienne Director, and Doctor Sahib in addition to doctoring, is Veterinary Consulting Surgeon, and also in charge of Props. and the Box Office. So it seems

that in my own house (or Caravan anyhow) I am going to be relegated to a trashy job of a mere nobody, as though I were a positive nonentity or two-penny half-penny fiddlestick and gimcrack, Faugh and Pshaw.

Indeed, when I enquired with praise-worthy calm that "What then is to be my part in this Circus," I am told I am *ear-marked* (the word in itself is an insult) as 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant to Magra the Indian Sword-Swallower, and if in that capacity I show good mettle, I may hope to become Bill-Poster-In-Chief, in addition to my duties of swallowing swords. A Bill-Poster, I would have you know, is a low person who walks to and fro pasting up Circus Adverts. and Notices on walls with a pot of glue or other adhesive mucilage. In fact a definite menial.

Of course this sort of thing can't go on. As for Mr. C. Lemon, I can hardly contain myself against him. Let me tell him that he has incurred my heavy displeasure and he had better beware lest he go too far, for next time very likely I will not be answerable for my behaviour, provided these sorts of cold shoulders and contumeliousnesses be not abrogated forthwith.

Certainly I will say one thing. All three of them have daigned to congratulate me hotly in respect of my two birds Edith and Dick, and well might they. Pipi says that Edith must be coached up to draw along a petty sort of carriage that used to be drafted by the Peruvian Llama (since deceased), and that Little Dick can sit in it simultaneously. I have cursorily examined this carriage, which is rather like our Indian jin-rick-shah and decorated with pretty fal-de-lals and jew-jaws. I shall think over it, the notion is not a bad one, indeed it seems likely that it will constitute a tremendous attraction to the Circus-Going Public. But if Mr. C. Lemon or anyone else thinks he is going to interfere into my coaching curriculum of my Edith and Dick, then he is sadly mistaken, let me tell him, for such interference will be only over my dead body.

# PUNCTUM GRAMMATICUM

Doubtless I should expatiate for information of Hoi Polloi and other illiterates that above tittle is an erudite and classic quodlibet of Latin language meaning to say “A Grammatical Point.” Now, whenever I retrospect my multifarious scholastical triumphs, it is abundantly clear to me that my special singularity, say rather talent of genius, is *Pure Grammar*. Indeed grammar was and is my consuming Passion, I can never have too much of it.

Once upon a time, while undergrad at a 1st class Varsity, I notched 98½ per centum at awfully stiff English Grammar Exam Paper and am creditably informed that this feat is still bandied about with bated breath in Varsity circles, being easily record. Also at said Exam, my thesis (Factitive Verbs of Incomplete Predication) was adjudged by a posse of highly artful professors to be “A very significant Contribution to the World’s Store-House of Knowledge.”

Even Mr. Cocky Lemon, an European person to whom the giving-of-praise is a rarity indeed, is freely and flatly admitting that in all grammatical concerns I am a pukka paragon and *Ne Plus Ultra*. I only mention all this not in any spirit of bombast and vainglorious braggadocio (Good Heavens, No) but simply and solely because there seems to be a highly deplorable modernistic habit to regard this splendid topic of Grammar (including its collataral branches, Accidence, Synthesis, Rhetorick, Syntactical Analysis, etc., etc.) as a mere handmaid of the Arts, not an Art in itself, in fact just utter fiddle-faddle and twiddle-twaddle not worth the pains. I have no hesitation that no more dastardly heresy than this could well be promulgated. Grammar is

not only a lovely accomplishment and hobbie by itself but also on the second hand High Proficiency therein may even confer rich financial emoluments, to those who are really cracks and dabs at it, as I shall now prove to you happened to me personally only since about 4 days ago.

Imprimis, you should kindly recollect yourselves that we (*i.e.*, Self, Dear Wife, and two fast friends as already adumbrated) have now inaugurated one 1<sup>st</sup> class company of "Circus" at this city of Alassio, Italy, vide my last Hebdomadal contribution to your highly esteemed columns, and since my arrival, I have noted with much gratification that there has been a phenomenal increase in all-round afficiency. My dear wife and consort Pipi is deligated the Business Manageress, and it is called in her honour the *Pepistasia Circus Coy. Ltd.* Mr. Cocky Lemon is the (self-appointed I must say) Ring-Master and Equestrienne Director, and is donning Mexican spurs, 2 cartridge-belts, and a large hattng of Sombrero. And Doctor Hatu Ram is Box Office, Props, and Consultative Veterinary and Medical Surgeon. Re Doctor Sahib's costume, least said better mended.

As far as concerns self, it was I admit freely a pretty cool cheekiness and damnable cold shoulder for an Indian gentleman of my variegated and egregious attainments to find that this Triumvirate (see above) has relegated me to a rather menial job where there is no scope to inflate, *viz.*, Assistant to Sword-Swaller, especially because said Sword-Swaller (named Magra) is terribly low in the scale of human evolution, and firmly believed by Doctor Sahib and Self to be an Untouchable, Harijan, Adi-Dravida or what not. So it is rather *infra dignitatem* (say nothing of noblesse oblige) to swallow, at this low fellow's behoof, swords, sabres, cutlasses, Schimitars, and other edged tools. However in deference to popular clamour, I have with almost

suprahuman magnanimity sacrificed my own tenderest susceptabilities on the Holy Altar of the Common Weal, and in the act of this business of Sword-Swallowing have definitely cut my neck internally, causing an issue of blood. Nonetheless when I look for sympathetic condolence in my mutilation, what do I see? Pipi, after a very cursory glimpse down my throat, makes quite light of it, and merely fobs me off with a neck-poultice of red flannel steeped in hot mutton fat, which she says is a famous specific for neck-troubles in Armenia. Secondly she has enjoined upon me low diet for 3 days (*Low* diet, mark you, after loss of blood!!) As for the Doctor Sahib he has the crass impudence to probe me with his dirty finger right down to my windpipe and then diagnose that there is not a foggiest symptom of any neck-cutting at all, *i.e.*, rupture of membranous tissue and cuticle but only some pimples, so it must be a slight eruption of tonsilitis, consequently prescribed a laxative bolus and diaphoretic. Comment I think is hardly superfluous.

The fact is that Sword-Swallowing is not a Hobbie that can be encompassed with impunity unless you may be reared up to it from your tenderest years. This Magra is doing these Swallowings daily since about 3 or 4 decades both India and Near-East so naturally his gullet, œsophagous, in fact internal pipes and ducts generally, are so widely distended by constant introductions of keen weapons and of course so pachydermatous as to be practically impervious, that now he would just as lief swallow a sword as a chupattie; or even battle-axe or blunderbuss if required. It's all one to him. But it is quite an other thing for a gently-nurtured delicate and thin-skinned gentleman of culture: to such an one the risks of throat-cutting are most perilous. The danger point; so Magra says; is the uvula, and to avoid that you must duck your head backwards till your vertebrae are almost cracking

and foist your tongue inwards spontaneously so as to make a concavity. However the fact is that it is too difficult a pass-time to teach by any course of postal tuition even with coloured diagrams, and I would warmly discourage any young fellow to attempt it without a personal tutor. Even I myself eschew the larger weapons as too risky, and confine my Swallows to petty tools such as poniards, daggers and stilettos, not more than 18 inches anyhow.

But it was not my attention to tell you re my Sword-Swallowing Exploits which I may say have caused rather a "furore," but rather my duties of Bill-Posting which is a collateral branch of my many-sided activities. As already intimated, every Circus has or should have one Bill-Poster whose duty is to adhere Circus Adverts, Labels, and Notifications, to Boards, Benches, Walls, Public Lavatories, etc. Of course I made a vehement fuss about this bill-posting on account of its menial nature. But as Mr. Cocky Lemon justly avers, a Bill-Poster if he does his job really and truly, is practically indistinguishable to a "Publicity Agent." So based on this understanding, *viz.*, that I am now no longer to be spoken of as *Bill-Poster* but *Publicity Agent*, so I am gladly pasting up bills with glue as occasion demands.

But nothing shall ever conduce me to undertake this degradatory mission of Sand-wich Man. This is an European invention, by which a man (or boy) affixes on himself a sort of harness including two boards, one afront and one behindhand, the whole system being then likened to Sand-wich, *e.g.*, meat in the middle. I must say my dear consort Pipi has shown herself rather noxious in this connection. She is saying to me over and over:—"What is there shameful about it? Have you not told me time and time again that 'Honest Labour wears a lovely face'. That work is a sweet and noble thing. That two men you honour

and no third, first the toilworn craftsman, and secondly somebody else I've forgotten? Have you not insisted that the sweat of the labourer is the sweetest savour on earth? Then, why don't you practise your preachings, now you've got the chance? . . . . .

All this Pipi is saying and a deal more too. The fact is it's no use to explain these esoteric dogmas to effeminate ladies, who have no earthly conception of Logics and Socialogical profundities. A thing may theoretically be a splendid notion I quite agree. But in practise, and judging each case on its intrinsical merits, it may be a mischievous injudicacy, or even positive imbecility. Anyhow I am catagorically refusing to do any sort of this "Sandwich" job, come what may! and I am sanguinely confident to obtain the universal encomiums and plaudits of the whole Intelligentzia class of our dear Motherland (Hindustan) for standing firm on this crucial point. Mutual correspondence cordially invoked, especially from married men.

Now with special reference to this business of advertising (as Mt. C. Lemon says, Boosting) to the world our performance of Circus with its keen thrills, its voluptuous raptures and enchantments of a really A.1 show, kindly note that prior to my arrival, the Managing Triumvirate (see above) had decided to give a special performance for the English Club, Alassio, and duly pasted bills accordingly of which following is true extraction:—

*The Pepistasia Circus Coy. Ltd. beg to announce to their English and other patrons that a grand Special Performance will be staged on the 28th instant at 6 p.m. (D.V. or not) comprising the following items:—*

- I. Performing Bears (with music).
- II. Chinese Midget (Female).
- III. The Terrible Turk (Tumbling, Acrobatics, and Trick-Cycling).
- IV. Grand Swimming Match . . . . .

Kindly note item No. IV specially, for it is the utter crux of the thing. Well, when the afternoon of the 28th instant dawned a terrible dilemma transpired because the professional Italian Swimsters engaged by Pipi for this "Grand Swimming Match" had got themselves absolutely tipsified through excessive dram-drinking and could never achieve any sorts of swimming in the least, being, as we say, totally *Be-Hosh* and *Para-Hua*, and no one else in our Circus could do this swimming except the Chinese Midget (so she says). So Mr. Cocky Lemon was awfully put out because he promised in the Advert "Money Returned if Unsatisfied," so very likely, without this Swimming Match our patrons would all persist their money-back.

So Mr. C. Lemon, say nothing of Pipi and the Doctor Sahib, being quite at their ends of wits, came to me as being the only hope to unravel this Georgian Knot. I studied the facts of the Quandarry with my unfailing perspicuity and prudence, and within two ticks, Hey Presto in fact, I formulated my considered appreciation of the situation, as we say in Army Circles. On which I turned to my 3 partners intimating them that the difficulty was as good as solved, and they must please not fidget themselves any more. I would be responsible to take this ticklish matter in hand and draw it to a thoroughly satisfactory conclusion. So then they all began to say "Yes I daresay, but what exactly are you meaning to do? What is in your mind? Tell us please." To which I replied that "No. You have inveigled yourselves into this awkward pickle of fish, through your own silly imprudence and I am willing, nay anxious to extricate you. But I must do it in my own style without interficious meddlements and bunglings, nor will I daign to acquaint you my attentions in advance. Leave everything in my capable hands and all will be well." With that they had perforce to be content, despite grousy

growls especially from Mr. C. Lemon who was always a doubting Thomas in my connection.

I forgot to say that this Swimming Bath is located just next to our Circus putlieus, having been rented by Pipi for this Performance at a whacking figure. So at 6-30 p.m. after having laid all my plans and while the Terrible Turk was doing his Tumbles, I hied off to the Swimming Bath, instructing Mr. Cocky Lemon to follow at an early juncture introducing the first "batch" of ticket-holders for the Swimming Match. I also strongly advised Mr. C. Lemon who is small-statured, but a very proficient exponent of fisticuffs, to kindly carry a tent mawl, or mallet, in case there would be any *goondaism* or wrecking Tactics, and he said he would certainly, and thanks for the tip.

Well, when the first lot came in ushered by Mr. C. Lemon with his mallet, I took up my position whence a strategic retreat would be feasible, and with some brief but well chosen verbiage I demonstrated to them the "Swimming Match." I daresay some of you smart chaps may guess how it was. It was just simply a large match-stick (Bryant-and-May specification made of timber) swimming on the water quite close to the brink. So there was no deception in the least, for no one could deny it was a match ; secondly it was swimming, certainly not sinking anyhow ; and thirdly it was indubitably a *grand* match as advertised, because the Bryant-and-May brand are much huger than the Italian sort locally marketed, known as Solferini.

I was telling them all this in English language, with some eke-outs of Italian phraseology, and for some fatal seconds I apprehended a sanguinary hullabaloo to break out, for there was some pretty sharp Booings and Yahooings. But just then Mr. C. Lemon interjected to them very adroitly that what a prime good joke and fun it would be that the first batch should inform to the remainder who were still in the Circus,

how *delighted* they had been with the Grand Swimming Match so as to see those others pulling angry faces in their turn. This was a prime good notion of Mr. Lemon's, and laughing heartily our patrons all rushed off to bring in their friends and play this practical prank upon them so as to deride them.

But this deriding and taunting was no use for the second batch, for there were no others remaining to deride. So in the end, the crowds became highly shirty and constankerous, and went off to the Manageress (Pipi) to get their money back. In the end, after much unseemly wangling they agreed to appoint arbitration, and by a great good fortune the arbitrator selected was Mr. Fauntleroy, to whom I have already animadverted in warm encomiums, as being such a prime good-fellow.

So we had a Committee, and I was the first witness for the defence. Any Grammarian will guess very well how I conducted the case. Firstly I produced a certified true copy of the Advert. There, in black and white, was written *Grand Swimming Match*. There was (kindly note) no hyphen betwixt "Swimming" and "Match." Ergo, and Q.E.D., Swimming was no Gerund or Verbal Noun; if it were, it must have hyphen. So it was simply and solely an *Adjective* in apposition and agreeing with "Match." So it would be clear to anyone, not being an illiterate bumpkin, that there never was any mention of any atheletic contest for swimming, and hence plea of complainants was frivolous and bad-in-law, and I prayed for a verdict accordingly.

I must say I was jolly surprised that Mr. Fauntleroy did not decide the issue in my favour forthwith and instanter. The fact is he knows almost nothing re his own mother-grammar, and admitted quite freely (Fancy! and this gentleman is a Vice-Consul!!) that he was not sure what a Gerund actually is!!! I had to put up two grammar-books before he would give

his verdict in my favour. He also explained to the spokesman of the complainants that if the Advert. had contained said Hyphen, he would have reversed his verdict. So it all ended very happy and nice, and my sharp Acumen, and High Proficiency in English Grammar (even down to Hyphens) is the talk of every tongue. Mr. C. Lemon is so delighted that he was donating me a ripping birthday present of "Modern English Usage" (demi octavo, cloth cover, gold tooling) which I have been hankering for many a day, and he opines that, with the vast treasure-house of informations concluded in this Volume, I shall very likely become millionaire in a month or two. I dare say that it is quite possible, it is a splendid book or rather tome, and I have already perused from A, AN, to CUI BONO with highly beneficent results. We have decided to hold an Aquatic Gala next week, of which full report will be furnished anon in due course.

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## OUR AQUATIC GALA

My gracious goodness me, what a spanking Tamasha our Circus-Cum-Aquatic Gala was to be sure ! Even Mr. Cocky Lemon who is ever a grudger of superlatives avers freely that it was in deed a "Bumper" and "Bonanza," and I myself would dare to wager that in these localities of Italian country it will for many long epochs, say even millenniums, be warmly acclaimed to be the very Zenith and Acme-Of-Apex of all that a Circus might could should and must be. But there is one nasty fly in our ointment (or as Mr. C. Lemon whimsically calls it) Bumble-Bee in the Vaseline ; *viz.*, that sorry to say it has ended into an awfully sharp inter-nuptial ruction twixt Pipi and self. Mind you, I freely pardon her all her short-comings and misgivings, because we must remember that Effiminate Ladies are, as Mr. C. Lemon oftentimes points out, "Kittle Cattle," and need to be wheedled and beguiled, being fundamentally denuded (More's The Pity) by an Uninscrutable Providence from this divine boon of Logic and Ratiocination, and no more earthly use to try to dun this *Sense-of-Reason* into their (female) brain-pans than it might be a stark mud wall. Because their actions and Cerebral Processes are activated not by *Reason* but by *Passion*, so you must bear with them, not reprehend and chid them because they can't help it.

For instance I have no hesitation what-so-ever that my behav'curs against Pipi in this rumpus have been so blameless as a milk-white dove and I defy the most captious carper to pick even a pin's hole in the *armour* of my innocence. Albeit, lest any unworthy

the business from 1<sup>st</sup> to last, not concealing even one jit or tottle of facts even though it redound to my own disfavour. I shall now tell the Truth, the whole Truth and nothing but the Truth, and shame the Devil, so God help me.

Firstly, kindly recollect yourselves that the whole stupendous responsibility for all the organisation and administration of this Superb Tamasha tumbled upon my devoted pate. But I make no claims for any preferential consideration for that account nor seek for praise and flatters. I simply mention it because vide my penultimate para above (Q. V.) I put myself on oath to tell the whole truth; so therefore to omit any relevant data would be to foreswear myself or even flat perjury, so I must do.

In planning out my Programme of Circus I ever held up before my lofty aspiration one sublime ideal, viz. that each and every item of tamasha must exert its own especial appeal to the emotions of Audience, such as wild excitement one minute, then heart-rending pathos, then keen scientifical interest, then innocent funs and jolly merriment. Etc. Etc. Etc.

For instance take item No. 1 (Musical Band of Orchestra) I chose as my motto "The Night shall be filled with Music" (Quotation) and it was indeed full-filled no doubt about that, and I am creditably informed that our steam organ with its voluptuous swell, its lilting cadences, and sonorous harmonical Arpeggios, was clearly audible up to 2½ miles distant easily.

Then Item No. 2 we had Performing Bears, 4 brutes in all, whose weird sagacity and disciplinarian curriculum not only charmed every sight-seer but strongly inculcated the imaginations of our young juveniles from the scientifical and Zoological aspects. Certainly one bear perpetrated a more or less serious

misdemeanour, but what of that? For details see below.

Then there was our Chinese Midget, female sex, and an A. i. freak being only 2 ft. 4 in. high. At least, she was either 2 ft. 4 in. or 4 ft. 2 in. I am not absolutely cocksure. She of course constituted a positively absorbing spectacle both from the biological view, and caused doubtless keen surmise and interest, such as into the urgent problems of Ethnology in Eastern Asia.

Ditto ditto for Achmet the Terrible Turk in his momentous trick-cyclings, and seemed to be totally immune from all the laws of gravitation, Capillary Attraction, Centrifugal Force, say nothing of Relativity. And ditto even more so for his highly risible clowning in the 2nd Half of Programme, of which his pranks and frolics were so awfully droll as to elicit peals of Homerian laughter from all and sundry.

But there is not a shadow of doubt that the Ne Plus Ultra of the whole show was "Professor P. Lal's Marvellous Performing Ostriches." (Extract from local Press Reports). Of course they were not Ostriches really, this was an ornithological blunder, they were Malaccan Cassowaries viz. my dear bird Edith and her little chick called Dick, brought along with me from Egypt Country as already adumbrated.

There is only one approbrious critickism I would level viz. against our Indian Sword-Swaller named Magra, whom I can never condone without a heavy meed of censure. One Marquese (Italian sort of Marquis only more so) came along bearing one Crusader's double-handed sword about 5 ft. long and said to me "I wager your man will never swallow this." I replied "Most certainly he will. That is his trade. He must do." So what was my deep shame and shirtiness when Magra totally refused to swallow same in the least, alleging that it is too huge and hulking thing as would

cut his guts, I personally regard Magra to be a pure funky coward, and have told him to that effect pretty sharp.

But what I say is that if Mr. C. Lemon had only left good alone, and refrained from his silly notion of "Side-Lines" as he calls them, being supernumerary additions to our Circus, everything would have quite been alright, and we should never have had these teasing ructions. But he would have them willy nilly, despite my energetic disclaimers, such as E. G. Contests for The Fattest Baby and The Ugliest Dog (though it may be vice versa for all I know) Bolster-Fighting on greasy Poles in the Swimming-Bath, Cock-Shies, being a sort of Nine-pins played with Coco-nuts, and Hoc Genus Omne. Of course all these Triffles are in the nature of petty larks and sprees, suited mayhap to irresponsible juveniles but distinctly beneath the serious notice of thoughtful minds. Consequently I very tactically intimated to him that "If you will insist to have these supererogatory extravaganzas, why not fix your aim to purvey rather intellectual and emotional or even psychical stimuli in lieu of these catch-penny whim-whams? Now I myself am the possessor of marked Histrionic Talent. Do you not opine that it would be a prime good notion if I may recite some Scenes and Acts from let us say Sir Rabindranath Tagore's immortal Classic 'Gitanjali and Fruit-Gathering'? Adopting of course my voice and other facial peculiarities to the varigated characters I must portray? Do you not opine so?"

He said "No, I do not opine so. And what's more, you miserable little Pip-Squeak, if you come pestering me again while I'm busy, with your Fruit-Gatherings and What-nots, I'll 'gather' you, my lad, so make no mistake about it."

I should like to know the opinion of the Educated Indian Public anent this reply from the lips of Mr. C.

Lemon, which may kindly be enclosed within "Confidential" cover. I know very well what I think about it. For one thing it proves that Mr. C. Lemon has no more reverence for a Giant-of-Letters such as our world-illustrious Bengali poet and Philosopher (Doctor Litt. Calcutta Varsity kindly note too) than if he were a mere clod-hopping bumpkin like our Magra. I am totally convinced that the system of British Army Education *vis-a-vis* Literature is definitely defective, for as far as I see, Mr. C. Lemon has reached to the comparatively high grade of Corporal-in-charge-of-Sanitation and nevertheless knows and recks literally naught of our Prodigy of Bengal ! I venture to think this is a pretty scathing commentary on modern British military methods, loathly though I am, to inaugurate inter-racial polemics.

However, afterwards about 10 minutes, Mr. C. Lemon came upon me, and in a quizzical fashion nudged me in my pleural ribs exclaiming that "Well Bitchy my boy, how goes it?" This he appeared to consider as an apology. So I replied that it goes as well as may be expected in the circs. He replied "Good. Well I'm going to take your tip. I am going to put on two sancy extras, (a) Best dressed gent and (b) Loveliest Lady. Both Competitions open to all the world, including neighbouring planets. That'll knock'em."

Of course this wasn't the same thing at all as "Gitanjali and Fruit-Gathering," but it seemed no good to kick up another rumpus against him, so I said just Nil. How I wish now that I had done exactly vice-versa, because it was this "Loveliest Lady" Competition that has brought nothing but curses in its train.

Re. "Best-Dressed-Gent" Competition I firstly conceived a warm notion that certainly I would enter myself personally for a contestant, being ever a dressy chap and strongly addicted to smart togs, but Mr. C. Lemon retorted such a flat non-Possumous and Veto,

that I abandoned such project willy nilly, what he said was that Why? what do you think the Public would say if the Management Staff themselves would bear away the palm in these competitions? Why, they would say the judges were bribed (i.e., illegal gratification) wouldn't they? In this there was a deal of truth doubtless, so I magnanimously withdrew my candidature and offered in lieu to be judge for either or both of these competitions, for which owing to my high aesthetical faculties, being an awfully keen student of form, and absolutely unscrupulous sense of fairness, I am admirably qualified to do so.

What a 1000 pities is it that in Pipi's connection Mr. C. Lemon was not equally firm and unbendable, for she with vociferous vehemence made known her unshakable whim to enter for the Loveliest-Lady-Beauty-Match, come what may. Of course far-be-it to deny that my dear wife and consort is unlovely. *Certainly* she is lovely, and when tricked out in her best costume of jew-jaws and fal-lals, including gold braid, green velvet and ostrich feathers say nothing of her own blooming face, she is indubitably what I should aptly term a pukka Bird of Paradise, in short a perfectly stunning apparition. But—and it is an important "But"—she is, like me, one of the permanent staff, indeed Managing Directress. What is sauce for the gander is ditto ditto for the goose, Eh? Not that she is goose of course, far from it being a sweet *Duck* rather, as I am often telling to her over and over. Anyhow she showed herself absolutely impervious to all dictates of reason as adduced by self and Mr. C. Lemon and was perfectly resolute to compete herself say what you will.

Well, anyhow on the Great Day we had for this Beauty-Contest three judges viz. Self, (*primus inter pares*) one highly aristocratic Italian nobleman named Marquese Belisario della Croce (the one who lent the Crusader's

Sword), and Mr. Fauntleroy H.B.M. Vice-Consul. You could hardly find a better Committee throughout the Universal Globe I should think.

I will admit freely that the spectacle of Pipi was perfectly ripping, not only facial liniments, bust, torso, arrangements of hairs (technically called "Coiffeur") graceful deportment and ladilike mannerisms, say nothing of sumptuous togs and accessories. She was the Scynosure of every eye, and the theme of rapturous ejaculations from far and near. In my considered opinion she was easily the best there, and gladly and proudly I would have awarded her the Laurel-Wreath and Guerdon of Beauty. But as already adumbrated above, what would the Public say? Would they not cry out aloudy upon us that this is Fowl Play and Fishy Nepotism? So speaking with much tact I ventilated these lucubrations to my two colleagues, and they quite agreed cordially.

So in the end after about 2 hours' comprehensive examination of all the 23 lovely "Graces" we allocated the Guerdon of Beauty to a smart young virgin named Signorina Candelaria Foscolo, who was not really a patch compared to Pipi.

Students of Classic Lore will trace out a striking similitude between these occurrences and the fabulous legend of Paris and the Apple of Discord. Paris being self of course, Pipi being the goddess Juno, and Signorina Candelaria=Venus. As is well-known, Juno got awfully ratty against Paris for not allotting her the Apple, and I see that in the end Paris was assassinated to death by a poisonous arrow, which is rather a terrible thought.

So I conceived a splendid notion (at least I thought then it was splendid), whereby a Second Prize e.g. a *Proxime Accessit* would be awarded to Pipi so as to alleviate her tantrums, which could be confidently anticipated. So I announced out that one generous

gentleman-donor, who wished to veil his anonymity under a bushel, was kindly awarding one especial prize for this *Proxime Accessit* Lady. Actually of course this nameless donor was I myself as you may readily surmise.

But the trouble was that in the terminal ceremony of Prize-giving, Mr. C. Lemon boggled the whole thing and speaking very aloudy, as is his wont, announced the award as “*Booby* Prize to Mrs. Piche Lal,” and everyone there who was understanding English language laughed and clapt like anything. Of course I was furious anent this impardonable indiscretion, interjecting hotly that it was no *Booby* at all, but a *Consolation* Prize. Nevertheless the auditors continued to laugh and guffaw apishly just the same, and I proceeded to chid Mr. C. Lemon in no measured terms pointing out how shamed he ought to be for his clumsy bungle. All he could say in extenuation was very sorry he quite forgot, having on his list other *Booby* Prizes (for humorous items such as 3-leg-race, greasy Pole Competition etc.) so it was just a slip of tongue.

I was explaining all this to Pipi very fully but nothing will consolidate her, she has become an absolute Cross-Patch and High Dudgeon, and went so far to box me on my jowl and chaps in a towering tantrum. So fearing further indignations I had to take my hook off to the caravan of Doctor Sahib.

But even here there was no peace, for Doctor Sahib during our Aquatic Gala (Item No. 2, Performing Bears), while stooping lowly to rectify some Electrical fitments, was bit pretty sharp by the biggest bear of all. I have critically examined the seat of injury and have diagnosed to Doctor Sahib that while the wound might be termed “Serious,” it could hardly be classed in the “Precarious” or “Critical” category, and that he ought to regard himself as a lucky chap indeed that the bite had not transpired in a vital organ, but in an

anatomical locality subsisting merely of meat fat etc. In fact his skeleton was not raptured in the least.

But nothing will please the doctor, you would think he would evince gratitude against kind visitors, such as me, embued with such compassionate tenderness, who spare no pains to alleviate and enliven his sick-bed with jolly puns and anecdotes so as to beguile him in his dark despair. But not at all. He is just lying there supinely upon his abdomen, and showing himself to be an absolute crusty curmudgeon. Why, he has actually evinced the cool cheekiness to maintain that I was in part responsible and blameworthy for the bear's bite, which absolutely beggars description. At that very juncture, I may say, I was sitting myself in the "Auditorium" chitter-chatting with a gentleman friend re. the political situation in the Austrian Tyrol. How could I possibly foresee that the Great Bear may be preparing to bite him? I have many good faculties I agree, but not that of prescience over the future behaviour of Brutes especially behind my back. So naturally I vacated from the chamber of this gross ingrate and seated myself on the ladder steps at the base of his caravan.

While thus seated, and plunged into the unplumbed depths of Dumps-and-Doldrums, at all these damnable cold-shoulders from each and every, I was eying (as far as my miserable tears would permit) the crescent moon arising o'er the Adriatic Sea. At least I think it is the Adriatic, when suddenly from out the darkness loomed one Italian telegram-boy on a bike, and having dismounted gave in my hand one telegram. Immediately I knew innately i.e. in my Subconscious Ego, that a crisis in my life is at hand, and my prognostication was perfectly correct, for the telegram was couched as per seq:—

*His Highness offers you Deputy Directorship Girls Schools Khushdilpur State. Stop. If acceptable report forthwith for duty confirming by wire.*

Nothing could be more certain this was the veritable Finger of Fate, to resist which were Sheer Blasphemy. So addressing the telegram-boy *sotto voce* (Italian for "Strictly Confidential") I whispered him "How much for the loan of your bike?" He said "Three Liras." Whereupon far from beating him downwards I donated him ten liras, which will show you that I was in a pretty reckless state of dare-devilry. Ten minutes later on I was swiftly peddling into the station of the Italian "Ferrovia" e.g. Railway, where I am now sitting inditing this Essay.

Of course it cuts me to my "quick" to relinquish thus, even as a temporary measure, my family members and nears-and-dears. But the Clarion Call of Duty can brook no refusal. Compared with that, my own personal proclivities and exigencies are as a grain of dust in the balance. My ruler, His Highness the Nawab needs me. That is enough. I obey his call, though I am sorry to see that the scale of stipend is not specifically mentioned in the wire. I could really not take up the post for less than Rs. 200 per mensem, plus the customary emoluments, house and travelling allowance, etc. But after all, the Nawab Sahib is a notoriously generous Pottentate. I dare say these lines may meet his princely gaze, so to him I would say:—"Nawab Sahib, beware of cheese-paring policies, and kindly remember the trite adage "Penny-wise, Pound-Foolish." Also "Spoil a ship for a halfpennyworth of tar." With these pithy reflections I will gladly leave the matter of my emoluments to Your Highness' august desecration."

PICHE LAL, B.A., etc.

[THE END.]

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at the Times of India Press, Bombay.**







